THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 6 July, 1924 Number 7

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By L. TROTZKY

Towards a New Policy.—VII

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The Labour Party and Power.—IV. What Should be the Attitude of the Left Wing?

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

London and Moscow

By Dr. R. DUNSTAN

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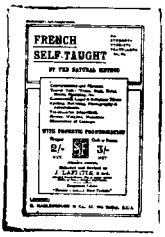

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VOLUME 6 JULY, 1924 NUMBER 7

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VOLUME VI

At the request of numerous subscribers, THE LABOUR MONTHLY will in future be bound in annual volumes instead of six-monthly as heretofore. The present volume will accordingly cover all issues during 1924, and no index will appear until the publication of the December issue.

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NOTES of the MONTH

The Labour Government — The Opposition — Why the Labour Government ?—British Bourgeois Tactics—Forestalling Labour Victory—Absorption—The Bourgeois Victory—The "Wider View"—The Court Dress Discussion—The Army and Strikers—India and the International—Profits—Disrupting the Movement—A Bourgeois Campaign—The Final Surrender—The Working-Class Reply

THE Labour Government brings to a head the deepest issue facing the working class. The battle within the working-class movement, which is still only half conscious, and finding its expression, is not a battle between two tendencies of one movement. It is a battle between the bourgeoisie and the working class. It is a struggle between capitalism and the Revolution for the soul of the British workers. That struggle was the issue behind the whole question of the war. That struggle was the issue behind Black Friday. That struggle was the issue behind the attempted exclusion of Communists and the attempted Industrial Truce. That struggle is the issue which to-day is brought to a head by the Labour Government. For the aim of a Labour Government, the aim of the power of the working class in order to transform society, is the supreme aim before the workers. But the existing Labour Government is using that aim, is using that conception, to attach the British workers to capitalism. If it succeeds in its policy, if its policy is allowed to go through unchallenged and unchanged by the Labour movement, then that means the defeat and coming to nothing of the existing movement, and the struggle of the British workers will have to find new forms. "It has taken us thirty years," said an old worker in a Union branch who had taken part in the struggles of the Labour Party from its inception, "it has taken us thirty years to build up the Labour Party, and now it will take us thirty years to destroy it."

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IN October comes the Conference of the Labour Party. At that Conference the representatives of the working-class organisations will have to take into review the actions of the Labour Government which is responsible to them for all its actions. According as they approve or disapprove those actions they will be settling, not only the future of the Labour Government, but their own fate and future as claiming to speak for the working class. For it is no longer an issue of differing policies and views and outlooks; it is an issue of action. It is the question whether Labour men shall administer all the bloody suppression and exploitation of Imperialism or shall fight it. On this question there can be no half answers or misleading resolutions. Therefore it is of vital importance that the fundamental issue shall be straightly put to the Conference. That fundamental issue is a class issue. It is fatally easy to imagine the kind of discussion that will be raised at the Conference. There will be a discussion on court dress. There will be a discussion on ministers' salaries. Strong feelings will be expressed. The ministers will explain that they have had much too big questions to handle on behalf of Labour to be able to give much thought to these details which after all are only a matter of convention. The hard-headed common sense of the delegates, while disliking court dress and big salaries, will on the whole agree with them. The Opposition will crumble. "A bit wild, but thoroughly good at heart. Of course they have no case." The Conference will break up in good temper with "the air cleared." If this is the outcome of the Conference, then capitalism will have won the victory in the Labour Party.

WHAT is the real position? If we wish to understand the real position of the Labour Government, we should begin by understanding the policy of the bourgeoisie. For it was by the action of the bourgeoisie that the Labour Government was placed in office, and it is only by the consent of the bourgeois majority in Parliament that the Labour Government is mainained in office to-day. This must be the starting point for any consideration of the Labour Government. Our first question must be: What is the aim of the bourgeoisie in maintaining the Labour Government in office? Is that aim the same as our own? If it is

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not the same, which aim is securing its objective—theirs or ours ? These must be the first questions in any objective consideration of the Labour Government. Too often at present the whole approach is sentimental and not realist. The desire, the aspiration for a Labour Government, the hope and the dream of what it may accomplish, occupies the forefront of the picture: then comes recognition of the " difficult " position in which it is placed—" in office, but not in power," " a Socialist Government, but not a Socialist Parliament " —and consequently the necessity not to expect too much, not to be " impatient "; finally, perhaps, comes a little sentimental opposition to one or two things that jar, such as Royal Visits or Imperial Junketings, but recognition that these things must be tolerated in the interests of unity and that criticism should be kept within bounds in order not to embarrass the Government. From this outlook follows a position in which no conceivable action or inaction of the Labour Government, no conceivable treachery or surrender, is felt to be at variance with Labour principles; in which the Labour Government is not expected to be able to accomplish anything, and therefore whatever it does accomplish, even though precisely the same measure from a Liberal or Tory Government would have been received with contempt, is hailed as a blessing from heaven; and finally a point is reached at which all the measures of imperialist coercion, military armament increases, action against strikers and the like are accepted as part of the natural order of things, while if the Labour Government so much as orders an extra feed of corn for the horses in government employ in Mandalay it becomes a token of a new humanity, a revitalising of official administration with a new and generous spirit, the introduction of a broader cultural outlook and the herald of the dawning of the coming era. Whether the creation of this type of atmosphere, which is obviously convenient to the Labour Government and naturally inculcated by the Government Press, is in the interests of the bourgeoisie or the working class is another question which it will be necessary to consider.

THE British bourgeoisie is the most skilful in the world. It uses at will, according to the situation, the most reckless bloodthirsty measures, as at Amritsar, and in the

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plan to blockade the miners' villages in 1921, or the most smooth-faced kid-glove procedure as in the historic Sankey Commission or the democratic functions of Buckingham Palace. Whatever method it uses, its objective remains unfaltering and the same: to maintain the enslavement of the workers and the extraction of profits. If, therefore, the bourgeoisie takes steps to establish and maintain in office a Labour Government, it is necessary to know the reasons. Fortunately there is no difficulty in learning these. Both Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Asquith, the representative bourgeois politicians concerned, have stated quite clearly the line of tactics they have pursued. We may first take the statement of Mr. Baldwin, who was responsible for dissolving the secure Tory majority and throwing the reins of power within Labour's grasp. Mr. Baldwin justified his action in his statement to the Unionist Party meeting. He said:—

> It was on unemployment that the Labour Party relied on coming to power within two or three years. Their calculations were that the discontent in the country coupled with want of action on our part would have swept them into power and us out by 1926. And I believe myself that that would have happened, and believe that in spite of the losses in this election we shall emerge all the stronger and able to bring to pass a great victory about the time when in my view nothing but disaster could have overtaken us.

Whether the future hope expressed in this is likely to turn out exactly as he thinks need not here concern us. What is important is that the primary concern of the Tory Prime Minister, according to his own statement, in causing the dissolution of 1922, was to forestall an absolute Labour majority, even at the risk of creating a Parliament with the Tory majority lost and an increased Labour representation.

MR. ASQUITH'S statement of his part in the process is equally clear. He explained in the National Liberal Federation that he had "no regret" for his part in establishing the Labour Government.

> We still sleep more or less comfortably in our beds. Capital steadily pursues its old routine of continuous and on the whole prosperous investment.

What was his reason then for putting Labour in power? His

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reason was precisely the same as Mr. Baldwin's—to forestall the danger of a real Labour Government based on a Labour majority and committed to endeavouring to carry out the Labour programme. The best preventive against this real danger of a working-class advance was the establishment of a tame Labour Government "with its claws cut" based on and subject to a bourgeois majority in Parliament, and so to be taught in leading strings the business of bourgeois administration. "The experiment could hardly be made under safer conditions." Such a bold proposal of inoculation as the best safeguard naturally aroused keen discussion in bourgeois ranks: but it rapidly won over the weightiest sections, and has increasingly received expressions of their approval. Liberal and Conservative leaders, Chambers of Commerce and business men have alike expressed their satisfaction with the experiment. "I regard," declared Lord Grey, "the advent of a Labour Government under these circumstances with no apprehension at all." "The Unionist Party," wrote the *Observer*, "definitely prefers a Labour Government on the present terms to any Liberal Government." Even such a representative of the old Coalition as Austen Chamberlain, who was at first bitterly opposed to the proposal, later confessed that the experiment was "perhaps not bad in the long run." We find representatives of the Conservative and Liberal Parties actually carrying on a controversy in the correspondence columns of *The Times* as to which Party was more responsible for maintaining the Labour Government in office. It is clear from daily expressions that the bourgeoisie is so far well satisfied with the results of its policy of maintaining a Labour Government.

WHAT is the calculation behind this satisfaction? It is based on two points. The first is that a Labour Government, placed in such a position and unable to carry out any of its promises, would be so discredited as to lose influence and lead to the Labour Party becoming internally disrupted and unable to reach its majority. This calculation has been set out with cold precision by the *Observer*:—

> There is, we believe, no modern case in any country where Socialism by taking office has not been weakened in its constituencies.

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And again:—

> Mr. MacDonald's Government cannot attempt to continue in office too long under present restrictions as a Ministry on sufferance without disrupting the Labour Party itself both in Parliament and in the country.

That is the first calculation. The second and more important is that the process of participation in Government under such conditions must necessarily mean the subjugation of Labour to the purposes of bourgeois administration, and therefore making all safe for any future Labour ministry. The raw material of pacifists, trade unionists, lay preachers and socialist propagandists would be deftly subdued to the tasks of administering the biggest capitalist empire in the world. This calculation has been set out with no less clearness by *The Times* in a leader in which it was amusing itself with the "highly illuminating" process by which a Government "in theory strongly pacifist" was being compelled to push through the House vast increases in Air Armaments through the instrumentality of a minister who had been "a notorious conscientious objector":—

> The great and manifold tasks of the Empire must in the end subdue these new forces to their purpose.

These two calculations are closely related and react upon one another. They are based on the assumption of so corrupting the Labour Party to the service of capitalism as to destroy its whole character and discredit it in the eyes of the working class. They represent in fact one aim, the supreme aim of the bourgeoisie in relation to the working class: to defeat the working-class advance, not otherwise easily to be countered, by securing within the ranks of the organised movement beforehand the victory of Capitalism.

THIS, then, is the supreme test by which the present position of the Labour Government must be judged. Is capitalism making progress in the working-class ranks? Is the Labour Government permitting itself to be made the spokesman and apologist of capitalist policy? Or is it using its position to fight and expose capitalist policy and to rally the workers against it? For according as it is doing one or the other the bourgeoisie or we are winning. It is unfortunately only too easy to answer this question. It is not necessary to look for an answer in the obvious

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jubilations of the bourgeoisie, of the Chambers of Commerce, and the Stock Exchange in their references to the Labour Government. The answer exists in the record of the Labour Government. In every sphere and department of policy during the past six months the Labour Government has appeared as the agent of the bureaucrats, the militarists, the imperialists and the big financial interests. The record, whether of armaments or of imperial coercion, of subsidies to foreign exploitation companies and refusal of money for work for the unemployed at home, of anti-strike action, secret police and all the rest of it, is sufficiently familiar and does not need repetition. To set against this record the charitable crumbs of revised relief scales, diminished tea and sugar taxes, &c., which the bourgeoisie willingly concedes to secure its major purposes of financial, imperial and European policy is to show a complete failure to understand what bourgeois policy is. Bourgeois policy is as dominant and all-powerful in this country as it has ever been in the past: but what makes this position serious is that, with this complete domination of bourgeois policy, with this unchallenged and unshaken imperial barbarity, reckless exploitation and financial speculation in the necessities of life, poverty and hardship of the masses of the people, Labour Ministers now go about saying that the country in this condition is more "settled" than it has ever been before. This is the real defeat of the movement. The record of action and inaction, criminal as it is, is not the biggest thing. The Labour Government could in any case do little enough save in so far as it could rouse the working class behind it. But it is the mental and moral surrender to capitalism which has accompanied this record that is the supreme treachery. As Mr. Clynes said in a memorable luncheon at Wembley :—

> "Even Labour," continued Mr. Clynes amid laughter, "is being converted or perhaps diverted by the signs of the times from its former grooves to the wider view."

WHAT is "the wider view"? Let us examine a few stray examples of it to see what it is that is being spread through the movement and whether it heralds the victory of the bourgeoisie or the working class. It is not necessary here to take the more signal utterances of the great

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leaders in the limelight, which serve to set the tone for the rest. These are familiar: their celebration of the Empire, their " hatred of revolution," their " distrust of Socialism," their pride in " that extraordinarily quiet massive service which is the British Navy," their belief in " the mission of the British race," their affection for " this Old Country " and its Constitution and King, their dislike of strikes, their zealous devotion to " national interests," their superiority and freedom from common Party ties and obligations, all these are a household picture broadcast a millionfold daily. But it is more important for our purpose here to note smaller signs of the process that is taking place, which will help to throw a sidelight on its political meaning and consequences, and will serve to indicate what is meant by the noble phrase of Mr. Thomas, when he declared:—

> Men faced with these responsibilities can never again be the indifferent propagandists that they were in the past. They must remain for all time responsible politicians, keeping only in mind the greater interests of a great country.

TAKE first the discussion on Court Dress. With zealous impartiality the *Daily Herald* has published a long discussion on Court Dress as on all similar stage-play subjects of " opposition " to the Labour Government. This correspondence is very illuminating as illustrating the kind of discussion that is encouraged on this subject. The division is presented as if it were a kind of division within a religious movement between Mr. Worldly Wiseman and Mr. Straitlaced Purist on the vanities of the World and the proper place of Convention. On the one hand it is argued that Labour has no time for such gew-gaws and fal-lals. On the other hand it is argued that a little brightness is very welcome. Finally the editor comes down with a paternal leader to point out that fuss and feathers are very foolish, but they should not be allowed to weigh against the pure gold of achievement of the Labour Government. And so the whole discussion is allowed to pass with no suggestion of the real issue, with no indication why the popular consciousness has justly seized on Court Dress as the symbol of the new régime, not because it represented the expenditure of a few pounds on finery or nonsense, but because it is the symbol

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of slavery, it is the open appearance of the Labour Ministers and their wives and daughters as the agents of the Old Order they were supposed to attack. And therefore the most significant expression on the subject is not the direct "practical" defence that may be offered or the direct attack that may be made, but the letting fall of some such chance expression as that of the wife of the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer to a capitalist paper that after all "it serves the purpose of supplying a certain amount of work." For fifty years the Labour movement, through its humblest propagandists and street corner speakers, has fought and struggled against all the vileness that that phrase implies: and now it is carelessly let drop by a Labour woman leader (as it was carelessly let drop by a Labour Minister in defence of building cruisers) in defence of Court Dress. It is in such chance mental revelations that the inroads of capitalism throughout the Labour bureaucracy are most clearly seen. When that foul sophism was allowed to pass without a protest or a challenge (save in a Communist journal) in a gushing interview of a leading Labour representative "After Her First Court" to a dirty capitalist sensation-mongering paper, then in that moment a point of degradation of the whole Labour movement was registered.

TURN to another direction—the Army. For how long has the whole Labour movement fought against the most open, the most direct and conspicuous use of the army as the instrument of capitalist power—the use of soldiers in industrial disputes? On other matters the movement might be divided by national illusions, and the opposition as a whole to the Army Bill and the Army Budget (once the bounden duty by signed pledge of every party in the old Second International) be left to a small group of pacifists. But on this there could be no division, and the Party as a whole was committed year by year to a stand. But on the assumption of power the Party was committed to responsibility for the whole machine, and had at once to eat its words. In other words the assumption of power meant, not the victory of the Labour Party over capitalism, but the victory of capitalism over the Labour Party. And this was most clearly seen when the Party had to defend its

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position against the opposition of a section led by Lansbury who put in an amendment against the use of troops in industrial disputes. All the ministers and their followers were compelled to vote in the capitalist lobby. A cry of protest arose from the workers over the country, so strong that it forced an entry into the *Daily Herald*, and a defence had to be made. A wretched minor Labour M.P. was put on to the job and did the best he could: he declared that he was in full sympathy with the object of the amendment, but he considered it was so unfortunately worded as to defeat its object, and was against official Labour policy, and so he was compelled to vote against it. To which Lansbury produced the simple and conclusive reply that the amendment in question had been the official Labour amendment the previous year for which the M.P. in question had himself voted. The correspondence did not continue. This in itself is only a picture of the position. But the damage begins to be visible when well meaning Labour men are tied up in the position. Take such a case as Mr. Ammon, now a Minister in the Admiralty, and formerly an active anti-militarist and left winger. A working-class constituent writes to him to ask him why he voted against Mr. Lansbury's amendment. Mr. Ammon could have replied quite simply that he had to do so because he is a minister, and that if it seemed good to have a Labour Ministry under present conditions, it meant swallowing a peck of dirt in the process. That would have been a straightforward, even if mistaken, answer. But Mr. Ammon unfortunately read the inspired defence in the *Herald* that morning, and so in simple triumph he wrote off a personal letter to his constituent telling him that if he would read that morning's *Daily Herald* he would find in it information that would put quite a different complexion on the whole matter. Alas for his short-lived triumph. His imperturbable correspondent wrote back, thanking him for the suggestion and adding that he had also read Mr. Lansbury's reply, and he would now be glad to hear what Mr. Ammon had to say. The final letter is pathetic. Mr. Ammon's secretary begs to state that Mr. Ammon sees no purpose in continuing this correspondence. It is an old story, a familiar story, a story as old as politics. But when it happens to Labour men who once were fighters—it is a pity.

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TAKE another direction of Labour policy—the Empire. The service of Empire, the propaganda of which has been the principal propaganda of Labour ministers since their accession to office, makes very definite demands of those who give themselves up to it. The Empire, like the military and naval departments, and unlike other show departments, is a part of the actual process of bourgeois coercion. Its acceptance is therefore a very important test of the subjection and surrender of the Labour movement. The bourgeoisie rightly complain that all the traditional utterances of the Labour movement, as well as all the present utterances of the real movement as it exists in street-corner propaganda and in the local union branches and Labour Parties, are deeply and bitterly hostile to the whole conception of the Empire. The capitulation to Empire was the most important step of Labour's accession to power: and it was vividly expressed at the very moment when that accession was still in doubt by MacDonald's famous coercion message to India of January 6, the significance of which was suitably enough emphasised on the European stage by Mussolini. To-day we have a new step in that process : the prosecution of Communism by a Labour Government in the Cawnpore trials with sentences of four years for endeavouring to organise a workers' and peasants' party with the programme of an independent republic. But the most significant thing is once again not simply the trial itself, but the manner of its defence by a Labour Government. For the noble ex-Governor of a Crown Colony and the Welsh professor who together constitute " Labour " for the Indian workers solemnly announce that they have no intention of prosecuting Communist propaganda as such : all that they are prosecuting is a conspiracy " to deprive the King-Emperor of His sovereignty of India." There is a certain type of answer known as the Ministerial answer with which intelligent men do not attempt to argue. This splendid specimen of that class, so profoundly Socialist in its whole spirit and outlook no less than in the form of its expression, deserves to stand as the monument of the Labour Government—the supreme utterance of the " triumphant " British working class to the Indian workers and peasants under the heel of Britain.

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THE Court. The Army. The Empire. There remains the central pillar of the citadel of Capitalism—Profits. If official Labour propaganda can be brought to bow the knee to the God of Profits—all's well with the world. The approach is delicate and can only be made slowly. The sanctity of interest on War Debt is defended by a tenacious Executive before an insurgent Labour Party Conference. The doctrine of a "revival of trade" as the supreme hope of Labour is preached in every Labour statesman's speech. The gospel of improved relations between Capital and Labour and due recognition of a just return for each is fervently proclaimed. And then suddenly comes a little incident, an offensive incident, which is the more noteworthy in that it aroused no comment. The profits of the Indian tea plantations are among the most notorious and the most crime-soaked in the history of Capitalism. On a basis of murderous exploitation, with wages of a few pence a day and conditions of semi-slavery, profits of 40 per cent. to 50 per cent., and even 100 per cent., free of income tax are declared. For the past year the profits have been particularly high. Taking simply declarations of the past week at the time of writing, the Empire of India and Ceylon Tea have declared 40 per cent., Dooars Tea 50 per cent., Jokai (Assam) Tea 52 per cent., while Makum (Assam) Tea declared 20 per cent. final dividend on the whole issued capital, having previously issued 100 per cent. bonus during the year and an interim dividend of 10 per cent., making a total for the year of 150 per cent. It was natural to expect some comment on this colossal exploitation in the principal Labour organ. Some comment did appear. But the comment that appeared was this :—

> TEA "TIP" THAT CAME OFF
>
> Tea plantation companies are rejoicing their shareholders with very handsome dividends, and readers who have acted upon the various recommendations of these shares which have appeared from time to time in these notes have done very well.
>
> *Daily Herald*, June 10, 1924.

THE corruption of Labour is only one-half of the aim of the bourgeoisie. The disruption of the unity of the working-class forces on the basis of that corruption of the official elements is the other half of that aim. And this is the part that is

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now coming into play. Having established the full rights of Capitalism within the Labour movement, the bourgeoisie is now very solicitously engaged in pointing out the incompatibility and inconsistency of maintaining Communism within the same movement, and the necessity of excluding those elements which still endeavour to carry on the war against Capitalism. A whole campaign for this purpose is being carried on in the organs of the bourgeois Press. On the one hand the Kelvingrove by-election, where the Labour candidate dared to disagree with those actions of the Labour Government in which the Labour Government had entered into alliance with Capitalism, was made the subject of paternal homilies to the Labour Party to show the necessity of preventing such unfortunate episodes and keeping out such undesirable elements if the Labour Party was to continue to receive the confidence of the bourgeois Press. On the other hand the unofficial Rail Strike, where men who had been played battledore and shuttlecock with between competing unions for years without consideration of their claims had dared to come out on strike for a minimum of three pounds a week, furnished the occasion of grave warnings to the Trade Unions to remember their function of disciplining Labour and dealing with the turbulent forces responsible for such outbreaks.

"THE Labour Party will do itself no good," declared the *Manchester Guardian*, "if it allows its official candidatures to be made the tools of a disruptive movement." And with striking unanimity *The Times* also comes out with similar sentiments after quoting with approval some remarks of the I.L.P. organ *Forward* :—

> It is a wholesome lesson. Perhaps it will result in the imposition by the Labour Party of a stricter test of the good faith of such as seek admission into its ranks in order that those whose object it is to capture the party for Communism may be excluded.
>
> *The Times*, June 4, 1924.

With no less unanimity of friendly advice the whole bourgeois Press came out on the position within the trade unions. "It is the business of the official," declares the *Manchester Guardian*, firmly, "to stop the unofficial strike," and to achieve this successfully it is desirable to develop "a first rate democratic technique."

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The Times is even more explicit. The spread of militant unofficial movements, it declares :—

> excites not unreasonable anxiety as to the future of the great organisations which the genius of the industrial labour movement has built up. *Only if these minority movements are countered and stamped out can trade unionism function* as the expression of the orderly mind and purpose of the organised workers.

And it goes on to what deserves to stand as a classic definition of Trade Unions in the modern State :—

> Trade Unions have won for themselves a responsible place in the industrial life of the nation. They have a privileged as well as a powerful position, which they retain not merely for the benefit of their members, but *in order that the organisation of industry on the side of the workers may be disciplined, orderly and trustworthy.*
>
> *The Times*, June 9, 1924.

The lesson is writ clear. The function of Trade Union and Labour Party organisation in the eyes of the bourgeoisie is to act as an organ of capitalism to discipline the workers and to " exclude " and " stamp out " every element of working-class revolt.

THIS is the culminating phase of the bourgeois campaign. The character of this campaign should be clear to the most careless and indifferent socialist and trade unionist. The quotations given above could be paralleled a hundred times over from every organ of the bourgeois Press in the last few weeks. That this campaign should be obediently joined in by those elements in the movement that have surrendered to Capitalism is only the logical counterpart of their surrender. That surrender on their part is no use to Capitalism unless it can be translated by them into positive combating of the working-class elements and disruption of the movement. Hence the continual goading them on to the fight by the bourgeois Press. And the obedient elements have responded. Mr. Cramp (who once was an apostle of revolution himself—but that was before the days of co-operation with the Secret Service) comes out with a flaming denunciation of the " disruptive elements " that is universally published and applauded in the bourgeois Press. In the *New Leader* the rail strike is denounced as leading to the danger of Fascism " in some form congenial to our national temper," in almost precisely the same language as the *Observer* at the same time.

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Forward comes out with a grand campaign against Communism at exactly the same time as the *Daily Mail*, and draws morals from the Kelvingrove by-election which are quoted with approval by *The Times*. The question of exclusion is raised again. It should never be forgotten that the deliberate policy of exclusion of working-class delegates was attempted by the official leadership already two years ago with the Edinburgh amendment. It was defeated by the universal opposition of the working class. It was withdrawn, not by conviction of its wrongness, but under pressure of events because it could not be enforced. It will be attempted again so soon as opportunity offers. If ever disruption comes to the movement, it will come from the Right.

THE working class will do well to note the danger from the quarter from which it comes. Not along the path which the bourgeois Press advocates, but along the exactly opposite path is the path of advance for the working class. The minority movements, the development of a disciplined and organised opposition, the organisation of the workers along the basis of the factory or other place of work in the unity of mass combination to overcome the old sectional divisions, the spread of the workers' own revolutionary party working within the whole organised movement—these, the measures which the bourgeois Press denounces, are the line of advance for the whole working class as a united force, and the sole means of saving the workers from the chains which the bourgeoisie is endeavouring to impose upon them through the official machine. In proportion as these beginnings develop and grow in strength, as they are already doing, the old leadership, supported by the bourgeoisie, will use every means to combat them and will be ready to disrupt the whole movement in order to maintain their power. They will endeavour to do this by disciplinary action and doctrinal tests, based, not on loyalty to the working class, but on loyalty to constitutionalism, parliamentarism, democracy or whatever other shibboleths they use to cover their servitude to the bourgeoisie. But they cannot do it. Neither the Labour Party nor the Trade Unions are based on democracy or parliamentarism. They are not organisations of individuals holding certain views, and therefore involving the

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right to exclude individuals not holding those views. They are mass organisations of the working class, based on one basis only (a very irrational basis to our democrats)—the working class. Their only test can be loyalty to the working class. That basis is by its very nature at war with the whole conception of constitutionalism, democracy, &c., which it is endeavouring to impose upon the movement from outside and which is only a cover for imperialist sycophancy. And therefore, as the working class grows to consciousness, the imperialist sycophants will inevitably find themselves more and more completely divorced from the working class. The chains which they have endeavoured to forge will be shattered. The working class will go forward to a real workers' government which will be able to help them and to break their chains because it will be based, not on the tactics and calculations of the bourgeoisie, but on the workers' own united strength.

R. P. D.

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THE REVOLUTION IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Struggle for Power in Holy Bokhara.—I

By EVELYN ROY

THERE are two aspects of the Bokharan Revolution of 1920 which resulted in the declaration of a People's Soviet Republic—one is national, the other international. It is the latter which makes this event significant for the man in the street, who in all probability has never heard of Bokhara the Holy, except as a name for expensive rugs adorning the houses of the rich; nor of its Amir, once rejoicing in the title of "Commander of the Faithful," and venerated by the Moslems of lands other than his own as second in sanctity only to the one-time Caliph of Constantinople. Had it not been for the immense international significance of this national revolution in Bokhara, the latter might have occurred in 1917 instead of 1920, almost simultaneously with that of the November Revolution in Russia, and might have accomplished its purpose with very little fighting or bloodshed, and almost no loss of life—for the whole population of Bokhara, except for the thin upper strata of corrupt nobles and clergy surrounding the court of the Amir, were unanimous in their desire for freedom.

Unfortunately, however, for the Young Bokharans who formed the vanguard of the revolutionary people, and for the oppressed and exploited masses who aspired to emancipation from their earthly miseries more ardently than for the promised delights of Mohammed's Paradise, the enslavement of Turkesthan had proved essential to the interests of two of the world's Great Powers whose rival imperialism had come face to face in Central Asia. One after another, all the five Khanates of Turkesthan—Tashkent, Khokand, Bokhara, Merv and Khiva—had surrendered their sovereignty to the advancing armies of the Russian Tsar in their projected march on India; while from the south and east, the outposts of British Imperialism responded to this advance by the rape of Baluchisthan

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and the subvention of Afghanisthan and Persia. The disintegration of Russian Imperialism by internal revolution brought about a momentary cessation of this struggle for power in Central Asia—a struggle destined to recommence again almost immediately when the contagion of revolutionary ideas spread eastward as well as westward, and the desire for national freedom on the part of native populations long suppressed saw at last an opportunity to express itself.

The Russian Revolution of November, 1917, with its proclamation to the various peoples and races that went to make up the former Russian Empire that henceforth they would enjoy equality and sovereignty, with the right of free self-determination, met with an immediate response on the part of all the Russian Asiatic dependencies which had groaned under Tsarist tutelage, and had tried vainly through their several revolutionary parties to win a modicum of freedom from the tyrannous exactions of the Khans and Mullahs (kings and priests) who were backed up by the Imperial armies of the former Russian state. From March to November of 1917, the months that separated the bourgeois republic of Kerensky from the rise of the Bolsheviks to power, these nationalist revolutionary movements in the Central Asiatic provinces gained more and more headway, though still controlled by the old machinery of repression. The victory of the Second Revolution in European Russia was followed almost immediately by the declaration of a Soviet Republic from Tashkent, the capital of Turkesthan. What had been the very heart of patriarchal autocracy became threatened by an inundation of the reddest of revolutionary ideas. The disintegration of Tsardom spelt the ultimate collapse of the Khanates and Emirates of Central Asia, with all their centuries of incalculable corruption, oppression and vice. The advance of the victorious revolution threatened to undermine the feudal monarchies of Persia and Afghanisthan. With a whole ancient world tottering to its fall, the revolution with its message of emancipation would be carried to the very gates of India! British Imperialism, the triumphant survivor of its once deadly rival, felt itself newly menaced, and henceforth became the most inveterate foe of the Revolution in Central Asia—became the backbone and foundation of the counter-revolution.

Those who read the daily papers without pausing to consider the

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hidden meaning of nine-tenths of what is published as mere " news," may remember having seen published in the world Press in June of 1923 an " Appeal from the Amir of Bokhara " against Bolshevik oppression, addressed to the governments of Great Britain, Japan, China, the United States, Turkey, Persia and to the League of Nations. This " Appeal " was given unusual prominence in most of the great London organs of capitalist opinion, and leading articles were written to add weight to the document itself, which aimed to expose Bolshevik barbarities in Central Asia. The cause of the victimised Amir was warmly espoused by these worthies—just as recently that of the deposed Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid and of his successor, the ex-Caliph of Islam, Abdul Mejid, has been similarly defended against the energetic action of the Angora Government. When the European Press begins with such unanimity to defend a lost cause so ardently, it is well to look below the surface and try to discover the reason thereof. The " Appeal " set forth in extremely vivid and picturesque language the " low and abominable character " of Bolshevik policy in Central Asia, which had abolished the independent governments of the Bashkirs and the Usbecks, "flooding the entire country with the blood of hundreds of thousands of Mussulmans "—" the Red Army bought and sold each others' wives and daughters, scoffing at the tears of their victims." The culmination of this devastation and oppression of Turkesthan by the Bolshevik forces was reached in the bombardment of Bokhara, whereby " one-third of the population was lost, mosques destroyed, the inhabitants (including the Amir) forced to flee and a government organised, calling itself the Independent Republic of Bokhara."

Such in brief is the context of this pathetic appeal to the civilised world to come to the rescue of the deposed Commander of the Faithful, so iniquitously robbed of his throne and driven forth from his kingdom. The world, particularly the Mussulman world, may have felt some acute twinges of indignation at this fresh instance of Bolshevik enormities, but, oddly enough, the League of Nations did not equip and send forth a band of holy crusaders to do battle in the cause of righteousness, and the Amir remains in exile in the court of his brother-potentate, the Amir of Afghanisthan, who kindly gave him shelter. The Bokharan People's Soviet Republic remains in

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power and continues to maintain the closest relations with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, to which it is federated. Nearly a year has rolled by since the launching of that forgotten Appeal, and though recent items in the world Press would have us believe that a new attempt is being made on the part of Russian White Guards and native bandits to upset the *status quo* in Central Asia, we may take it that this is but another indication of the fact that the struggle for power in that remote but important region of the earth is not yet ended, and that in spite of reports to the contrary, the Bolsheviks are holding their own.

So much having been said on the international aspect of the Bokharan Revolution, a few facts may be cited which throw new light on the national side of the struggle, which resulted in the establishment of a republic in 1920. What were the conditions that led up to this revolt, and how came it to be successful in the end ?

The Bokharan Revolutionary movement had existed since the end of the nineteenth century, as a natural result of the intolerable conditions which prevailed under the combined oppression of the Russian and Bokharan autocracies. Open rebellion had been prevented by the armies of the Tsar, which were placed at the disposal of the Amir. The government of the latter, nominally independent, was in reality a protectorate of Russia, which kept a Resident Agent there to exercise control. Railways and telegraphs, built by the Tsar's government, were entirely controlled by the latter, and Russian garrisons maintained respect for the real power behind the Amir's throne. This theocratic potentate, regarded by the Moslems of Central Asia and neighbouring countries as the embodiment of powers not only earthly, but divine, was held in superstitious veneration by the Moslem world, and the fame of Bokhara el Sharif as a centre of Islamic culture attracted pilgrims and students from all the Mussulman countries. Such international prestige in no way lightened the burden which official robbery, corruption and vice imposed upon the Amir's immediate subjects. This despot regarded Bokhara as his own personal estate, and the government income, wrung from the labour of the people, as his pocket-money. Over one-half the national income was given over forthwith to himself and the Mullahs and Begs (clergy and nobles).

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The wealth extracted from the miserable populace was squandered in the licentious pleasures of the court and harem, and in maintaining the dignity of the Amir in neighbouring capitals. One of his pleasure-palaces in the Russian Caucasus has now been turned into a rest-house for convalescent workers, who to-day enjoy the luxury which was wrung from the sweat and blood of the Bokharan peasant and handicraftsman. It is one of the minor conquests of the Russian Revolution.

Political suppression naturally accompanied these economic exactions, which were a constant provocation to revolt on the part of the masses. The Amir's power was absolute; the rights of the people nil. Those who were brave or rash enough to urge for reform were either imprisoned, tortured and executed or massacred outright. These patriarcho-feudal rights of the Bokharan ruler were protected by the rifles of the Tsar, and the fact that he was a mere puppet of the Russian autocracy increased the hatred of his own people against him. This feeling was shared even by some of the younger priests, drawn from the ranks of the people. Large numbers of Mullahs joined the Bokharan secret revolutionary organisations, one Mullah Ikram being a prominent leader. The Shiahite massacre of 1909, directed against the Bokharan Government for giving the biggest posts to the Shiah sect of Moslems, and repressed by the Tsarist troops, was organised by another priest, Mullah Bachi. But the real centre of discontent lay in the exploited peasant masses, whom exorbitant taxation has reduced to the direst poverty. Not a year passed by without its peasant riot or rebellion, put down with the utmost cruelty.

There was little opportunity for a strictly nationalist movement to develop in a country where no chance was given for a native bourgeoisie to evolve. Russian capital ruled uncontrolled, enjoying every guarantee, while native capital had none. After the construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway, an immense trade developed between Central Asia and Batoum on the Black Sea, to which a branch railway ran, connecting it with the Trans-Caspian. For one hundred and fifty miles, this Central Asian railway line traverses the territory of Bokhara, resulting in a great stimulation of trade. A certain number of Bokharan intelligentzia, educated in Russia and imbibing the ideas of the revolutionary movement there,

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constituted the nucleus of the Young Bokharan Party, which together with the discontented elements among the priests and trading class agitated for the granting of constitutional rights and the limitation of the power of the Amir. After the Russian Revolution of 1905, which had its echoes in Bokhara as well, all the revolutionary parties and factions united into one central organisation known henceforth as *Mlada Bukharsi*.

(*To be concluded*)

APPENDIX

COPY OF TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE DEPOSED AMIR OF BOKHARA[1]

(*Translation from the original*)

IN the name of God Powerful and Almighty, I, the humble Mahmed-Taghi-Beg, son of the Premier of the Government of Bokhara, have prepared myself for the solving of the Peace of Bokhara, Amir-Ali-Khan, Shadow of God, who was compelled because of the aggression of the Russian and Bokharan Bolshevist Parties, to leave the country and flee to Afghanisthan, and who is at present under the protection and surveillance of the Afghan Government. Also in the name of all Moslems ; of the Court of the Islamic nobility of those localities, and of the merchants and landowners and individuals of Bokharan nationality, for the regaining of our Holy Lands, we conclude a semi-official Treaty with the Military Attaché Consul-General of the great State of England, plenipotentiary to Meshed, which is one of the regions of Persia.

In every way, before beginning the struggle for the conquest of Bokhara and the liberation of these territories from the hands of the Russian and Bokharan revolutionaries, to acquire and strengthen the friendship, to begin a review in the Council of the Holy National Assembly (may Allah be pleased), and also in International Conferences, after raising the question of the defence of the defeated rights of the weak Bokharan nation, and of liberating its dear lands from the hands of the conquerors and enrolling it as one of the defenceless States of the world. And also a request on the part of the defenceless Bokhara to the Council of the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers of the great ruler of England, that through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to demand

[1] When the existence of this agreement was announced in the *Isveztia*, in June of last year, the British Foreign Office issued the following official statement : " There is not the least foundation for a statement published in Moscow that Great Britain has concluded an agreement with the anti-Soviet Emirs of Turkesthan by which she would accept a protectorate in that region." There is, however, no question as to the authenticity of the document published above, which was signed in December, 1922, by Mr. Prideaux, as representative of the British Consul. The India Office may, however, have refused to ratify the Treaty.—EDITOR, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

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one representative from Bokhara, in order to receive a voice at International Conferences.

In order that, at the sessions of the Court of the English State and for the discussion of any questions pertaining to the Bokharan nation, and for reports at the Conferences of other Powers—we present one semi-official Treaty, in order to rise for the conquest of the State of Bokhara; and the Bokharan nation preparing itself to move into Bokhara, and after attaining its aims, the nation of Bokhara is ready to support all plans and wishes of the English Government with regard to Turkesthan, and to render moral, material and armed assistance and, like other nations, to submit completely to (national?) orders of the great State. And the other condition is, that all expenditures during the time of war must be made by England, upon the condition that one of the true representatives of Bokhara should enter this Commission.

(1) The Government of Bokhara will accept all expenses necessary for the liberation of Bokhara from the hands of the Bolsheviks from the Official Commission empowered by the English Government.

(2) For all expenses, the Government of Bokhara is ready to give away to the English any choice place, without discussion, for use for an indefinite time.

(3) The Government of Bokhara is ready, during the time of the reconquest of Bokhara and her liberation from the hands of the Russians, to accept all orders and counsels, without any refusals, up to the time of final peace in Bokhara.

(4) I, Mahmed-Taghi-Beg, son of the Prime Minister of Bokhara, have the plenary power to conclude such a semi-official Treaty with the British representative in Meshed, and ask among other things, that the English Government enter into negotiations with Afghanisthan and first receive permission for his departure, and in case of failure to receive this permission, then the support of the English Government for the nation of Bokhara must pass either through the son of the Amir of Bokhara, or with the aid of some members of the Court of these localities.

(5) The Government of Great Britain knows that during the stay of the Russians in Turkesthan, they had been the cause of the war, and having semi-officially taken away Samarcand from the Amir of Bokhara at the time of the conclusion of the Treaty between Russia and Bokhara, Samarcand was included by the Russians in their territory, and Katta-Kurgan declared as the boundary of the State. Consequently, after the reconquest, Samarcand should be as before included in the territory of the State of Bokhara.

(6) The Government of Bokhara is ready to accept all expenses incurred by the English, with expenses for all kinds of wars and military armaments up to the conquest of the territories of Bokhara and Samarcand, upon presentation of a bill by aforesaid Commission.

(7) The Government of Bokhara takes upon itself the obligation, after the reconquest of Bokhara, during thirty years to leave the military rule of the British, and after thirty years, the military chiefs and commanders shall be British, while all armies shall be composed of the nationals of Bokhara.

(8) The Government of Bokhara pledges itself, after concluding the Treaty with England, to make no treaties with any one else, except in case when the English give their permission.

(9) The Government of Bokhara is ready to cease all friendship with the Afghans and Persians and Turks and Khivans and to be exclusively under the control of the Government of Great Britain.

(10) The Government of Bokhara pledges itself not to bring its wares on the European market and not to trade in them, without the permission of the English.

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(11) The Government of Bokhara is ready to transfer the telegraph, posts customs, and internal and external transit into the hands of British supervisors. Telegraph, post and customs will be in English hands.

(12) The Government of Bokhara will leave up to a certain time, to the plenipotentiaries of England, all ministerial institutions for the carrying out of order inside and outside the country.

(13) The Government of Bokhara undertakes the obligation to receive no representative of Russia or any other European power or of other governments in general, without the permission of England.

(14) The Government of Bokhara will send the best sons of the nation nowhere else but to England for study, and all the students of Bokhara in Great Britain will be cared for in moral and material way, by the British.

(15) The Government of Bokhara presents to Great Britain all internal revenues arising from mines, subsoil, and running rivers from which profits can arise.

(16) The Government of Bokhara may circulate no money out of the British coins, excepting that part of the gold which will be placed in the Bank of Bokhara under the control of the internal Government.

(17) The Government of Bokhara buys in England the machinery for the erection and running of factories; in some cases where it will be to a greater advantage, it has the right to purchase them from other governments.

(18) The Government of Bokhara will receive and bring over military equipment for a time from England, but later, upon the decision of the Government, may erect in its country factories for war-supplies, without prohibition by Great Britain.

These eighteen points, in the semi-official form of a Treaty, are concluded between the Governments with the aid of the Major Attaché of the Consulate of the Government of Great Britain in Meshed. The nation and the Government of Bokhara hope that England will pay some attention, if only for the sake of friendship, and in a brief time before the International Conference will make clear that it supports the Government of Bokhara and will remove this pernicious Russian force and liberate our defenceless and unhappy nation.

And if England should find some deficiencies contained in the eighteen points of this Treaty, the Government of Bokhara promises to accept all propositions of the National Assembly. Also, if in this Treaty contained in these eighteen points, which is presented to the Consul-General and to the Major-Attaché, the Government of Bokhara or the Bokharan nation should desire to introduce some changes, Great Britain shall, without taking offence change the Treaty and replace the disputed paragraphs.

I, on my side, Mahmed-Taghi-Beg, son of Bashi-Beg, the Prime Minister of Bokhara, conclude with the permission of Amir-Ali-Khan, as well as in the name of the entire nation of Bokhara, this Treaty in Meshed with the Consul General and the Major-Attaché of the British Government for the friendship of the two States, in the hope that what shall be necessary will be done to achieve the liberation of Bokhara.

If this Treaty should have deficiencies, let know, in order to change it.

Place of Seal. (*Signed*) MAHMED-TAGHI, Son of MULLAH KHALI MIRZA NYUN GASHI BEG.

Khed. . . . (Signatures of copyists, translators, &c.)

Year 1341 (*Arabian style*)

Month Djamadnal Akhir.

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H. G. WELLS AND LENIN

The Philistine Discourseth on the Revolutionary[1]

By L. TROTZKY

We are able to publish in advance the following translation of a chapter from a forthcoming book by Trotzky.

IN one of the many books containing pronouncements of prominent men regarding Lenin, I came across an article[2] by the English novelist, H. G. Wells, entitled "The Dreamer in the Kremlin." The editor of the book makes the observation, that "even such advanced people as Wells failed to understand the import of the proletarian revolution proceeding in Russia." It would appear as if this is not regarded as a sufficient reason for refraining from publishing Mr. Wells' article in a book which is devoted to the leader of this revolution. But it is not worth while worrying oneself about this: I at least read some of the pages of Wells not without interest, but this was not the fault of the author as will be seen from what follows.

One can still vividly call to mind those days when Wells paid a visit to Moscow. This was during the cold and hunger of the autumn of 1920. There were already premonitions of the complications which were to follow in the spring. Starving Moscow was wrapped in snow. Our economic policy stood before a sudden and thorough-going change. I very well remember the impression which Vladimir Ilyitch derived from Wells: "Ugh! What a narrow petty bourgeois! Ugh! What a Philistine!" he repeated, raising his hands over the table with that laugh and that gasp which was characteristic of him when he ever felt a sort of inner shame on account of another man. "Ugh! What a Philistine!" he repeated when he again called to mind that conversation. This conversation between Lenin and myself took place before the opening of a sitting of the Political

[1] *Copyright in Canada and the United States of America.*

[2] This article was printed in London as Chapter VI. of Mr. Well's *Russia in the Shadows.* (Hodder and Stoughton, 6*s*.)

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Bureau, and was practically confined to a repetition of the above-mentioned terse characterisation of Wells. But this was quite sufficient. For myself, I had read little of Wells and had never met him personally. But I was able to envisage in a fairly clear manner this picture of the English drawing-room socialist, of the Fabian, of the writer of phantasies and Utopias, who had come to view the Communist experiments. And the exclamation of Lenin, and in particular the tone in which he made this exclamation, enabled me to fill in the remaining features with little difficulty. And now this article by Wells, which in some inexplicable manner has found its way into the pages of the collection of articles on Lenin, not only revives in my mind that exclamation of Lenin's, but has also filled it with a vivid content. For, if in the article by Wells there is practically no trace of Lenin, one can see Wells in it as plain as plain can be.

Let us begin with the introductory complaint of Wells: he was compelled, just think, to take extraordinary pains in order to be able to speak with Lenin, which he (Wells) found " tedious and irritating." Why, pray? Had Lenin summoned Wells? Had he pledged himself to give him a reception, or had he so much free time on his hands? On the contrary. In those extremely difficult days he was occupied every minute of his time; he could not so easily find a free hour in order to receive Wells. This should not have been difficult for a foreigner to understand. But the whole trouble was that Mr. Wells, as a distinguished foreigner—and with all his " Socialism " a most conservative Englishman of the imperialist type—was filled with the conviction that he was conferring a great honour upon this barbarian country and its leader by condescending to visit it. The whole article of Wells, from the first to the last line, stinks of unwarranted smug self-conceit.

The characterisation of Lenin begins, as was to be expected, with a discovery. Lenin, only think, is " not a writer." Who, indeed, is better able to decide this question than the professional writer Wells? " The shrill little pamphlets issued from Moscow in his (Lenin's) name (!) full of misconceptions of the labour psychology of the west . . . display hardly anything of the real Lenin mentality." The noteworthy gentleman is of course unaware of the fact that Lenin has written a great

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number of works of the highest importance on the agrarian question, on theoretical economy, on sociology and on philosophy Wells is only familiar with "shrill little pamphlets" with regard to which he remarks that they merely appear "over Lenin's name," that is, he insinuates that they are written by other people. The true "Lenin mentality" is to be found, not in the dozens of volumes written by him, but in that conversation, lasting but one hour, which the most illustrious visitor from Great Britain most graciously deigned to hold.

One could at least expect from Wells an interesting sketch of Lenin's outward appearance, and for the sake of one well-portrayed feature we would have been ready to pardon him for all his Fabian trivialities. But the article does not contain even this. "Lenin has a pleasant, quick-changing, brownish (!) face with a lively smile . . ." "He is not very little like the photographs . . ." "He gesticulated a little with his hands over the heaped papers as he talked . . ." Mr. Wells did not get beyond the banalities of the average reporter to a capitalist newspaper. For the rest, he made the further discovery that the shape of Lenin's head reminds one of that of Lord Balfour's, it being domed and slightly one-sided, and that, as regards his figure, he is a "little man—his feet scarcely touch the ground as he sits on the edge of his chair." As regards the shape of Lord Balfour's head we are unable to say anything concerning this dignified piece of anatomy and are quite prepared to believe that it is domed. But for the rest—what an impolite piece of carelessness! Lenin was a somewhat reddish-blonde type of man. He can in no wise be described as being brownish. He was of medium stature, perhaps a trifle under the average height; but that he gave the impression of being a small man and that when seated he could hardly touch the floor with his feet, this could only be apparent to Mr. Wells who, with the self-confidence of a civilised Gulliver, had penetrated into the country of the northern Communist Lilliputians. Mr. Wells further remarks that Lenin in the pauses of the conversation had the habit of screwing up one eye. "Due perhaps to some defect in focussing," suggests the very discerning writer. We are quite familiar with this gesture. It was to be observed when Lenin had before him

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a man with whom he was entirely unacquainted, at whom he took a rapid glance. Lenin's defective focussing consisted in his seeing through and through the man with whom he conversed; through his puffed up self-conceit, his narrow-mindedness, his civilised haughtiness and civilised ignorance, and after he had taken this picture into his consciouness, he long afterwards shook his head and exclaimed "What a Philistine! What a thorough-bred petty bourgeois!"

The conversation took place in the presence of Comrade Rothstein, and Wells, in passing, makes the discovery that his presence "is rather characteristic for the present condition of Russian affairs:" Rothstein, as one could see, was controlling Lenin on behalf of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, in view of the excessive candour of Lenin and of his dreamy lack of caution. What can one say regarding this precious observation? When Wells entered the Kremlin he brought with him in his consciousness all the rubbish heap of international bourgeois presumptions, and with his lynx-eyed sharpness—oh, of course, there was no defective focussing there!—he discovered in Lenin's study all that he had previously sucked in from *The Times* or some other reservoir of the hair-oil and spats brigade.

In what now consisted the real import of the conversation? As regards this we receive from Mr. Wells some pretty hopeless commonplaces, which show how wretched and barren Lenin's thoughts appear after passing through the prism of another mind, regarding the symmetry of which there is not the least occasion to doubt.

Wells came "expecting to struggle with a doctrinaire Marxist," but as a matter of fact he "found nothing of the sort." We are not surprised at this. We, of course, know already that the "Lenin mentality" was not revealed by his activity, extending over thirty years, as a politician and writer, but in his conversation with the English citizen. "I had been told," continues Wells, "that Lenin lectured people, but he certainly did not do so on this occasion." How indeed could one teach or lecture a gentleman so overfilled with high self-estimation?

That Lenin loved to "lecture" is, in general, not true. What is true is that Lenin was able to speak in a very instructive manner.

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But he only did this when he was of the opinion that the man with whom he was conversing was capable of learning something. In such cases he spared neither time nor pains. But as regards the magnificent Gulliver, who by good fortune had been able to enter the study of the "little man," after two or three minutes' conversation with him Lenin was forced to arrive at the unshakeable conviction—perchance in the spirit of the inscription over the portal of Dante's Inferno—"Abandon hope all ye . . . !"

The conversation dealt with the subject of large towns. As Wells remarks, the idea first occurred to him in Russia that the outward aspect of a town is determined by the trade in the shops and in the markets. He retailed this discovery to Lenin in his conversation. Lenin "admitted" that under Communism the towns are becoming considerably smaller in extent. Wells "suggested" to Lenin that the renovation of the towns entailed a gigantic work and that many huge buildings in Petrograd only retained their value as historical memorials. Lenin also assented to this incomparable commonplace on the part of Mr. Wells. "I think," adds the latter, "that it warmed his heart to find someone who understood a necessary consequence of collectivism that many of his own people failed to grasp." Here you have an appropriate measure for judging the mentality of Mr. Wells! He regards as the fruit of his own wonderful acumen the discovery that under Communism the present concentrated urban agglomerations will disappear and that many of the present capitalist architectural monstrosities will only retain their value as historical memorials (if they do not merit the honour of being destroyed). How, of course, should the poor Communists ("the tiresome class-war fanatics" as Wells calls them) hit upon such discoveries, which for the rest have long since been set forth in the popular commentary upon the old programme of the German Social Democracy. We will not elaborate on the fact that all this was already well known to the classical Utopians.

Now I hope you will understand why Mr. Wells found that that laugh of Lenin's of which he had heard so much "not in evidence." It was not a laughing matter for Lenin. I even fear that his jaws were being moved by a reflex action directly opposed to laughter. But here Lenin had recourse to the service of his

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dexterous and skilful hand, which was always ready to conceal in good time the impolite yawn from a man too much charmed with his own conversation.

As we have already heard Lenin did not teach Wells—for reasons which we consider quite justified. As compensation therefore Wells was most emphatic in lecturing Lenin. He imparted to him the very original idea that for the success of Socialism "it is not only the material organisation of society you have to build . . . it is the mentality of the whole people." He pointed out to Lenin that "the Russian people are by habit and tradition traders and individualists." He explained to him that Communism was "pressing too hard and too fast, and destroying before it was ready to rebuild," and other things to the same effet. "That brought us," relates Wells, "to our essential difference, the difference of the evolutionary Collectivist and the Marxist." Under evolutionary Collectivism one must understand the Fabian concoction of Liberalism, Philanthropy, economic social legislation and Sunday homilies regarding a better future. Wells himself formulates the essence of evolutionary Collectivism as follows: "I believe that through a vast sustained educational campaign, the existing Capitalist system can be civilised into a Collectivist world system." Wells himself does not explain who will carry out and upon whom will be carried out this "vast sustained educational campaign": the Lords with the domed skulls upon the English proletariat or, *vice versa*, the proletariat upon the skulls of the Lords? Oh, no, anything you like, but not the latter! For what purpose do there exist in the world these enlightened Fabians, the men of thought, of altruistic conduct, ladies and gentlemen, like Mrs. Snowden and Mr. Wells, if not—by means of a regulated and prolonged exuding of that which is hiding itself under their own skulls—to civilise capitalist society and to transform it into a collectivist one with such reasonable and happy "gradualism" that even the Royal Dynasty of Great Britain will not perceive it?

All this was set forth by Wells to Lenin and to all this Lenin listened. "This amazing little man," Wells graciously remarks, "with his frank admission of the immensity and complication of the project of Communism and his simple concentration upon its

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realisation, was very refreshing (!)." But for Lenin? Oh, long-suffering Ilyitch! He was probably pronouncing under his breath some very expressive and spicy Russian words. He did not translate them out loud into English, not only probably because his English vocabulary did not extend so far, but also out of consideration of politeness

Ilyitch was very polite. He could not, however, confine himself to a polite silence. "He had to argue, therefore," says Wells, "that modern Capitalism is incurably predatory, wasteful and unteachable." Lenin referred to a number of facts which, among others, are contained in a recent book by Chiozza Money; Capitalism has destroyed the English national docks, has made it impossible to exploit the coal mines in a rational manner, &c. Ilyitch was familiar with the language of facts and figures.

"I had, I will confess," concludes Mr. Wells unexpectedly, "a very uphill argument." What does this mean? Is it the beginning of the capitulation of evolutionary Collectivism before the logic of Marxism? No, no, "abandon hope"! This phrase, which at the first glance appears unexpected, does not occur by mere chance; it forms part of the system, it bears a strictly outspoken Fabian, evolutionary, pedagogic character. It is expressed with an eye to the English capitalists, bankers, lords and their ministers. Wells says to them: "Just see, you behave so badly, so destructively, so egotistically, that in my discussion with the Kremlin Dreamer I found it difficult to defend the principles of my evolutionary Collectivism. Listen to reason, take every week a Fabian bath, become civilised, proceed along the path of progress." Thus the devout confession of Wells is not the beginning of self-criticism, but merely the continuation of the educational work on this same capitalist society which has emerged from the imperialist war and the peace of Versailles—perfected, moralised and Fabianised.

It is not without a feeling of benevolent patronage that Wells remarks concerning Lenin that his faith in his cause is unbounded. There is no need to dispute this. What is true is true. This fund of faith gave him, among other things, the patience to converse during those depressing months of the blockade with every foreigner who might be able to serve even as an indirect means of communica-

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tion between Russia and the West. Such was the conversation Lenin had with Wells.

It was quite otherwise when he spoke with English workers who came to him. He fraternised with them in the most hearty manner. He at once learned and taught. But with Wells the conversation, by reason of its very nature, had a half-enforced diplomatic character. "Our multifarious argumentation ended indecisively," concludes the author. In other words the encounter between evolutionary Collectivism and Marxism ended this time in nothing. Wells took his departure for England and Lenin remained in the Kremlin. Wells wrote a series of choice articles for the consumption of the bourgeois public and Lenin, shaking his head, repeated: "There goes a real petty bourgeois! Good gracious, what a Philistine!"

But one may ask, why on earth have I, almost four years afterwards, reverted to such a trifling article by Wells. The fact that this article has been reproduced in one of the books devoted to the death of Lenin is no sufficient justification. It is likewise no sufficient justification that these lines were written by me in Sukhum while undergoing a cure there. But I have more serious reasons. In England at the present moment the party of Mr. Wells is in power, led by illustrious representatives of evolutionary Collectivism. And it seems to me—I think not without reason—that the lines written by Mr. Wells concerning Lenin reveal to us better than many other things the soul of the leading strata of the English Labour Party: taken as a whole Wells is not the worst of the bunch. How hopelessly behind the times these people are, how burdened with the heavy leaden weight of bourgeois prejudices! Their arrogance—the belated reflex of the great historical rôle of the English bourgeoisie—prevents them from penetrating in a proper way into the life of other nations, into new ideological phenomena, into the historical process which is sweeping over their heads. Narrow-minded followers of routine, empiricists wearing the blinkers of bourgeois public opinion, they carry themselves and their prejudices into the whole world and are careful not to notice anything around them but only their own persons. Lenin had lived in all the countries of Europe; had made himself master of foreign languages; had read, studied and listened;

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made himself familiar with things, compared and generalised. Standing at the head of a great revolutionary country, he omitted no occasion to learn conscientiously and carefully to ask for information and news. He followed unweariedly the life of the whole world. He both read and spoke German, French and English with ease and also read Italian. In the last years of his life, when over-burdened with work, he surreptitiously, during the sittings of the Political Bureau, studied a Czechish grammar in order to come into first-hand contact with the workers' movement of Czecho-Slovakia; we sometimes " caught " him at this when he, not without some slight embarrassment, passed it off with a laugh and apologised . . . And there on the other hand we have Mr. Wells, incarnating that kind of pseudo-educated, narrow-minded petty bourgeois, who look around with the intention of seeing nothing and who consider that they have nothing to learn as they feel quite assured with their inherited stock of prejudices. And Mr. MacDonald, who represents a more solid and sober puritan variety of the same type, pacifies bourgeois public opinion: We have fought against Moscow and we have vanquished Moscow. They have vanquished Moscow? These are indeed wretched " little men " no matter how tall physically! To-day, even after all that has transpired, they know nothing whatever about their own to-morrow. Liberal and Conservative business people without the least difficulty bait traps for these " evolutionary " socialist pedants who are now in office, compromise them and intentionally prepare their downfall—not only as ministers but also as politicians. Simultaneously—although far less intentionally—they prepare for the coming to power of the English Marxists. Yes, indeed, of the Marxists, " of the tiresome class-war fanatics ." For the English social revolution will also proceed in accordance with the laws laid down by Marx.

Mr. Wells, with his characteristic, pudding-heavy wit, once threatened to take a pair of scissors and trim the " doctrinaire " hair and beard of Marx and to render him English and respectable: to Fabianise him. But nothing has come of this and nothing ever will come of it. Marx will remain Marx just as Lenin has remained Lenin after Wells had subjected him for an hour to the tormenting effects of a blunt razor. And we venture to predict that in the not

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distant future there will be erected in London, in Trafalgar Square for example, two statues standing side by side: Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. The English proletarians will say to their children: " What a good job it is that no little pygmies of the Labour Party succeeded in trimming the hair or shaving the beard of these two giants ! "

In anticipation of these days, which I myself will endeavour to see, I close my eyes for a moment and distinctly see before me the figure of Lenin in his armchair, the same chair in which Wells saw him, and I hear—on the day following or perhaps on the day of the conversation with Wells—the words, accompanied by a heavy gasp: " Ugh ! What a petty bourgeois ! What a Philistine ! "

Sukhum, April 6, 1924.

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TOWARDS A NEW POLICY.—VII[1]

By J. BROMLEY

(General Secretary Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)

I AM asked to give my views on the needs of a reconstruction of British Trade Unionism.

Frankly I fear they square so little with the popular cry of the moment that they will cut little ice, at least for a few years to come, although I believe if they could be considered by the rank and file itself they may bear some little fruit in time.

To begin with, I do not agree with the teaching of the one big union, or even that of industrial unionism, whatever that may mean, for I have scarcely found two of its exponents who agree on the point. I imagine I can hear the shrieks of horror at this bald statement of disagreement with the popular cry, so let me at once endeavour to palliate my offence.

I do believe in the workers being solidly organised so that class consciously they can present an absolutely united front to capitalism at any time and all the time, and so whilst protecting each other, they can, at the same time, pursue capitalism to its inevitable doom, and hasten it. I do not, however, agree with the teaching of amalgamation of unions into ever bigger and yet bigger unions while the present internal structure of all our unions is what it is. Let me give a few reasons why. In the first place, British trade unionism is at present dominated by the union officials, so is the Trades Union Congress, so is the Labour Party Congress (as everyone knows if they will admit it); the rank and file have very little direct and continuous management of their union, and therefore are not interested. This is the reason such an unsatisfactory percentage of workers are or-

[1]Previous contributions to this series by Messrs. W. H. Hutchinson (of the A.E.U. and the Labour Party Executive), George Hicks (of the Builders and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress), Will Lawther (of the Yorkshire Miners and the Labour Party Executive), Robert Williams (of the Labour Party Executive and Secretary of the Transport Workers' Federation), A. A. Purcell, M.P. (Chairman of the General Council), and A. J. Cook (General Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain) appeared in first six numbers of the current volume of THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

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ganised; this is the reason for the present weakness; this is the reason for the mistrust between officials and rank and file, which friend Hutchinson speaks of; this is the reason of the unofficial strikes, and of the general apathy.

The popular cry is: whilst leaving all this as it is, make still bigger unions—which interpreted into fact and practice means: make bigger and still bigger officials, more and more out of touch with the rank and file, whilst the very size of the mass would make it more difficult for the members to direct policy and make the ponderous machine move. That is why I disagree with it. It would merely intensify existing evils.

I am not in favour of our movement being autocratically ruled by a small junta, however well intentioned they may have been *at the beginning*, for what would happen if at a moment of crisis they sided with the enemy? I would rather the movement was so reconstructed that it could be ruled by the rank and file.

Then there are certain grave defects and failures in the big union itself. You may take a thousand men to a tailor and order a thousand ready-made suits of clothes. They would all be clothed, but a few would be fitted.

Similarly with a trade union. It is not enough to tell a man he is in a big union for fighting purposes (especially if it never fights); he must feel that in between the fights his union clothes and protects him like a garment at all points of his working life; thus will confidence be inspired, membership retained, class consciousness acquired and good fighting material prepared for the battles when they come.

This is not merely groundless criticism of an idea. Ask Tom Moore what became of the big industrial unions of Canada, where the workers tried to build on these lines. Ask him what was the end of the Newfoundland "one big union," which embraced at one time all but the fishermen. What became of the Knights of Labour of America, and several big industrial unions formed in the States, without going back into history to remember the fate of the attempt in this country to run one big union?

They all perished as a result of the inertia of their own bigness, from the fact that minorities were crushed however just their grievance; that the members were out of touch with the management, and that the leaders were too big to be strong.

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Is it necessary to point to one or two failures, on a smaller scale, to keep big unions together in this country even in the last few years?

Lastly, there is the very real, and to my mind the grave danger, of the strong, virile sections, or minorities with a real grievance, in a big union being dominated and indeed crushed by the apathy of the others allowing the *big leaders* to trounce the so-called malcontents for speaking out of their turn and whipping them to heel even to the extent of siding with the employers and the capitalist Press to lick them into subservience. That is not progress. It is not even standing still. It is going backwards.

In my humble opinion, you can organise the workers into a thousand unions, or ten, or even one, but if you have not made them class conscious you have failed, and therefore I say, start and reconstruct from the bottom, with greater power from the bottom, not by giving more power to the top by the extremely simple process of amalgamation of the existing wrongness. Which is the way then ? Not by trying to unify the ranks by idealistic programmes. The minimum wage idea sounds well on the platform, but what would it mean in practice ? Why, a danger of nothing but a mere bread-and-butter wage for all. Not by giving trades councils more representation, for in the ultimate they are dominated by the unions they may represent, either locally or if they were given representation at the T.U.C. Not by crying out that no single union can win alone—we know they cannot, because the other unions do not come to their aid, largely because of leaders, and not due to the lack of will of the rank and file.

In my serious and considered opinion the way to reorganise the movement ; make living, interested members; and to obtain a united class-conscious front in our time, is to start reconstruction from the bottom, give the rank and file more power and permanent officials less.

I would advocate that each union be divided into districts, with a maximum of twelve or fourteen districts (we are not a large country); that each branch in each district send a representative to a district council, which council should have fairly wide powers in its district, except for strike action; that each district council should send a representative to a central National Council, which should replace the

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present Executive Committees whether permanent or elected for a period of years.

The district councils would meet at stated intervals and concentrate their instructions from the branches, sending their representative forward with them to the national council, and would meet again to receive his report of the national council work, which they would in turn take back to the branches for interpretation into action. Thus would the branches be brought into direct control of the whole machine.

They would have the power of initiative and recall. They would instruct their delegate to district council and hear his report. He in his turn would instruct the district council delegate to the national council and hear his report. The national council would get direct instructions from the branches through the district councils, not by a host of paper resolutions but by the man himself, one of their number, who had come direct from the branches, and woe betide the representative who failed his members ; he could be superseded immediately, and the permanent officials would at once become secretaries to the representatives of the rank and file. Not autocrats, but loyal servants of their fellows, knowing they were correctly interpreting the wishes of their members, who in turn would get a renewed interest in the knowledge that they were directly controlling the policy of the union.

Representatives to the T.U.C., the Labour Party Congress and all other national bodies (except to federations, who would be from the national or district councils as the position may require) should be elected by ballot vote of the members, a permanent official only accompanying them as secretary.

The General Council and Labour Party Executive should, after being nominated by the unions, be also elected by the ballot vote of the rank and file instead of as now by the block vote.

Annual and other Conferences of the unions should also be elected by ballot, with permanent officials in attendance only, but with no deciding power. Thus would the whole machine pass into the control of the rank and file of our unions, who after all are intelligent, grown men and women, and who, if I read the signs correctly, will not much longer be content to be whipped to heel by their own union officers every time they desire to move.

They may agree to be guided by their fellows of the ranks, but

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that is quite a different thing, for the so-called extremists are not all the mad disruptionists they are often called, but thinking men desirous of cutting the cackle and getting to the hosses.

Such a scheme of reconstruction would, I believe, shake the dry bones of our movement, re-awaken the members, bring the workers closer together for one common object, thus giving them a conscious aim and confidence in themselves, and I feel sure we should soon hear less of division and more of progress.

I have endeavoured to set down my ideas in plain, simple language, without catch phrases or shibboleth, and with the sole desire of helping to realise the aims of the struggling mass, which under our present union structure is so often inarticulate.

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THE LABOUR PARTY AND POWER

IV.—What should be the Attitude of the Left-Wing?

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

[*There are certain points in the following article which call for some editorial comment lest the views of so regular a contributor as Comrade Price should be taken in this case to correspond with those of* THE LABOUR MONTHLY. *The policy of* THE LABOUR MONTHLY *is not and never will be designed to create what Comrade Price calls "the psychological atmosphere necessary to impress the Labour Party Right Wing and the careerist element which is among them," nor to advocate the Fabian tactic of "capture by stages of the parliamentary and administrative machinery of capitalism"—which in effect means to surrender Marxism for a programme of revolution by State purchase. To suggest that the Labour Government (which contains in happy unity a Chelmsford, a Haldane and a MacDonald) is not a Government of coalition with capitalism because there is no pact with the Liberal Party is to take a very naive view of coalition; and to argue that we should not fight this policy of coalition with capitalism because the masses are still heavily under illusions (as if they were not far more heavily under illusions at the beginning of the war) is to reveal a lack of revolutionary confidence at a critical moment. This failure inevitably leads to the subsequent proposal of a nebulous "left wing" and final vacillation between the Second and Third Internationals, and even to the familiar attempt to raise the ghost of Rosa Luxembourg against Lenin. In this part, when Comrade Price's argument leads him even to give currency to the old slanderous social-democratic suggestion that Lenin stood for "sole reliance on the illegal apparatus," it is necessary to state quite plainly that Comrade Price's argument is driving him into a camp in which he will find little congenial company. We publish this disclaimer to assure our readers that* THE LABOUR MONTHLY *will never tolerate the exploitation of the terminology of Marxism, even by a writer of the highest reputation as a Marxist, to cloak a policy, which, while repudiating sentimental pacifism, yet inevitably must encourage the apostles of social pacification.*—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.]

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I HAVE in the recent series of articles[1] reviewed the situation which faces the Labour Government both nationally and internationally. It will be observed by those who have read these articles carefully that two threads run through the narrative : one indicates the failures of the Labour Government (some of them serious) to make a breach in the wall of capitalism, where a breach might be made; and the other indicates that the Labour Government has made some very important achievements, which are by no means to be despised and which indicate that the heart of the Labour Party is still sound. The Left-Wing may sometimes be inclined to dismiss the Labour Party as another of those " traitrous " Reformist parties and to predict for it a similar fate to that of the miserable Social Democratic Party of Germany. And it may be that it will go the same way as its sister party; but again it may not. Just as the social revolution has gone a very different way in Russia to what it is going in Germany, so it may go a different way in England to what it went in either. For Marxists do not ignore the fact that the rate of development and decline of capitalism varies in different countries through historic and geographic conditions and that decades of capitalist education in one country set tactical problems before revolutionary Socialists, which do not exist in a country where an immature industrial capitalism and agrarian feudalism still overlap, as they did in Russia and to a more limited extent in Germany.

And so the different conditions prevailing in this country last winter to that which prevailed in the winter of 1918–1919 in Germany, have brought it about that the British Labour Party has not, as yet, sold the pass by entering into a coalition government with the Liberals, but has nevertheless succeeded in making its influence felt in the country, although it is a minority government. It has provided better maintenance for the unemployed, prepared a comprehensive Housing Scheme, made an improvement in pensions and considerably reduced the indirect taxation, which falls so heavily on the workers. It has shown the masses what it would do in the way of stopping evictions, were it not for the obstruction of the Tories. On the other hand it has failed as yet to provide any scheme of public development of national resources to absorb the unemployed and is relying in a way which may prove dangerous to itself

[1] Previous articles appeared in February, April and May issues.

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on the slight improvement in the foreign trade of the country, which has reduced the unemployed figures. Abroad it has done well to start the ball rolling with Russia and to tackle seriously the problem of making a comprehensive economic treaty with the Soviet Republic which will make a Labour Government in future less dependent on Wall Street for cotton, foodstuffs and credit to support the pound sterling. It has done well also to scrap Singapore and to adopt a friendly attitude towards the powers behind the French government, in order to avoid giving undue encouragement to the reaction in Germany. On the other hand it has failed over the Soudan loan,[2] it has proved itself utterly helpless to attack the hydra of the Anglo-Indian oligarchy, it has pandered to militarists over the five cruisers and has compromised itself with the robber scheme of the " Experts " to stabilise sweated labour in Germany. In short both at home and abroad the Labour Government has done some things well and some things badly. But, when all is said and done, it has a better record after six months than the German Social-Democrats had after four years.

Now the attitude of the Left-Wing in any movement should be to look ahead at the ultimate objective, to keep clear before the workers the consciousness of the probable necessity to use all methods both political and industrial to attain those ends, to keep in advance of the masses, but never to get so far ahead that it loses contact with them and their everyday practical problems. It is therefore no use clothing oneself in sack-cloth and ashes and going about croaking like ravens that the Labour Government has sold the British workers to the bourgeoisie and that all is lost. Such tactics will only make the group that does this ridiculous, and nothing kills in English politics so easily as ridicule. A general Jeremiah on the record of the Labour Party in the last six months is not likely to go down with those who have been receiving some benefit, however slight, from increased unemployment pay and lower sugar taxes, and will only condemn those who indulge in them to a splendid isolation which may be gratifying to themselves, but to no one else. Nor will extracts from the speeches of Zinovieff and Trotsky in 1920 impress those unemployed engineers, who are hoping from an

[2] An article by H. P. Rathbone on the subject of the Soudan Loan will appear in our next issue.—EDITOR, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

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Anglo-Russian agreement to get to work again, any more than a recitation of what the Sultan of Zanzibar said in the year One. Without reflecting the least on the brilliant writings of our Russian comrades, it is nevertheless essential to adapt language to the mentality of the country in question.

An immediately practical proposition at the present time would be, I submit, to assist those elements of the I.L.P., which are not saturated with sentimental pacifism to keep along a straight course and to give them the tip when to pounce down on the Labour Government with shafts of unanswerable criticism whenever it deviates from the path. These elements are to be found in considerable numbers not only north of the Tweed, but also south of it, as the York Conference undoubtedly showed. But if they are dubbed " political bankrupts " and " agents of the bourgeoisie " from the first, the psychological atmosphere necessary to impress the Labour Party Right-Wing and the careerist element, which is among them, will be absent. The way to " steal the leadership " of the Labour Movement is not to announce the fact on the housetops, but to win the confidence of all those in the Labour Party and the I.L.P., who are seriously concerned with the task of getting under public ownership the principal key industries of Great Britain, as a first step towards the establishment of the Socialist commonwealth. This confidence can only be won by objective criticism and by showing what practical measure, which leads us one step towards our end, can be undertaken under the present balance of class power, both in Parliament and in the workshops, as existing at the present time. Such cases as the failure to extract or publish conditions from the Soudan financiers for the public money loaned to them, as the building of the five cruisers, as the failure to summon a conference of Indian nationalists and trade unionists to thrash out a new constitution for India, as the failure to prepare plans for a public development of electrical power stations at home, &c., should be shown up. They are practical steps in the direction of the ultimate end. This criticism, moreover, should not be accompanied by a personal attack on the character of the Labour Ministers and officials of the Labour Party, even if some of them are going out of their way to lick-spittle to royalty. These types can be left to their own condemnation by the healthy instinct of the rank and file.

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A united front of all Left-Wing progressive elements within the Labour Party, the I.L.P. and the Communist Party is essential and can only be attained by the methods suggested above. Needless to say the task would be very much easier, if there were not in existence already certain barriers of organisation existing between the Left-Wing groups, which barriers were thrown up as a reflex action from the Continent during the years of acute revolutionary struggle immediately following the war. I refer more particularly to the splitting off of the Communist from the Centrist Socialist parties and the foundation of the Third International. No doubt it was essential throughout large parts of the Continent to carry out this severance in organisation in those countries under the conditions prevailing at that time. In Germany, Austria, Poland, the Balkans, Italy and Hungary the State machinery of capitalism had temporarily collapsed and the Centrist groups by their pacifism and inaction were aiding the Reformist parties to get capitalism back again into the saddle. A clear cut in organisation was essential in a period when capitalism was resorting to direct action to get back its powers. Only by this means was the field clear for direct action of the workers in defence. With the passing of the period of storming the fortresses of capitalism, temporarily overcome by panic, the period of besieging and trench warfare commenced again. This fact has been recorded time and again at the various congresses of the Third International since 1920. Indeed that year, when the Red Army was driven back from Warsaw, when the Italian workers retired from the occupied factories, when the German trade unionists, victorious in the general strike, which overthrew Kapp, put back the bankrupt government of Ebert and Mueller into power again, that year, I say, marked the ebbing of the revolutionary tide in post-war Europe. But though that tide has ebbed, capitalism has not established itself or solved its hopeless economic problem of how to dispose of its bloated surplus values. The necessity of guerilla warfare on many fronts has replaced the tactics of staking all on one direct action, which will probably not occur again till capitalism either in another war or by some desperate action to hack its way out of its difficulty, plunges the world into a new catastrophe. Now this guerilla warfare needs the co-operation of elements which were sundered in organisation during the period of "storm." That co-operation is

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difficult, almost impossible in a country like Germany, where Reformists, Centrists and Communists were often found during these years on different sides of the barricades. This makes the task of creating the united front in Germany at the present time so thankless, especially since the Communist Party has now behind it a rich tradition of heroic struggle and sacrifice and such great martyrs to keep the fire of party patriotism burning like Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Such conditions, however, have not existed in this country. The split in the I.L.P. in 1920 was less in response to the conditions imposed by the nature of the class struggle in England at that time and was more an automatic reflex action of what was going on on the Continent. The complete failure of the British Communist Party to capture the mind of the working class during the great industrial crisis (the only opportunity for direct action on a large scale that has occurred for years) in the following year is the best proof of this assertion. Since then the only hopeful method of attacking British capitalism, which, though weakened since the war, is in nowhere near so serious a state as it is in many Continental countries, is by guerilla warfare on the industrial front and the capture by stages of the parliamentary and administrative machinery of capitalism. For this purpose it is possible to obtain a large measure of agreement between various shades of Socialists. But the abortive parties and groups arising from the artificial splits of 1920 have been left high and dry. Their absence of fine fighting traditions and of a number of martyred leaders should, however, make reabsorption into the mass parties a matter of greater ease than in Germany. The affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party would effect this and the opposition of the Labour Right-Wing might be overcome if the Communist Party were to adopt the tactics towards the Labour Government which I have set down in the above lines.

That the writer of this article is not without precedents in the history of contemporary Marxian tactics can be shown by reference to some of the writings of Rosa Luxemburg. It is well-known on the Continent that there was for many years between Luxemburg and Lenin a difference of opinion on questions of party organisation. While Lenin was in Switzerland, preparing for the Russian Revolu-

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tion, he laid down certain tactical rules for the formation of revolutionary Socialist parties. The chief aim in his tactics was the building up of the legal apparatus of the party upon the illegal basis. He saw, and rightly saw, that he could do nothing in a country like Russia with a semi-feudal government, which had not even permitted the relative freedom of speech and movement of a purely capitalist country, without a secret apparatus as his mainstay. On the other hand Rosa Luxemburg saw that for Germany, which had for some years since the fall of Bismark: and the abolition of the Socialist Law been able to build up a Socialist Mass Party on a legal basis, sole reliance on the illegal apparatus was impossible. Both Lenin and Luxemburg were right for their respective countries and for the conditions under which they had to work, and the Reformists, who try to make capital out of this difference in order to prove that Luxemburg was hostile to the Russian Revolution merely show their stupendous ignorance. Nevertheless arising out of this difference between the outlook of one working under Russian and one under German conditions, comes the difference between those who would see an early split between anti-militarist, pacifist, and emotional Socialist parties like the former German Independents and the British I.L.P. on the one hand and the Marxian Communist groups on the other and those who would see these two trends of working class psychology contending with one another in the same party organisation. Under Russian conditions so much secret work has been necessary that open discussion between groups in one party has become impossible, because party life has become dominated by illegal struggle against Tsarism and since the Revolution by the struggle against the counter-revolution. Only now with the defeat of the counter-revolution and with the coming of the economic problems of reconstruction, is healthy criticism coming in the Russian Communist Party. It is not the fault of the Party leaders, for conditions of the class struggle in Russia made this so. On the other hand even during the war, when the military censor of Kaiser ism was busily at work, Rosa Luxemburg objected strongly to the attitude of several of her colleagues on the German *Spartakusbund* (the Left-Wing of the German Independent Socialist Party), who were agitating in 1917 for a split in that Party and the founding of a separate Communist Party of Germany. In a series of trench-

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ant articles in the Duisburg *Kampf*, which I quote in my *Germany in Transition* (p. 236), she wrote : " The *Spartakusbund* is only another historical tendency of the German proletariat. It is characterised by a different attitude on nearly all questions of tactics and organisation. But the view that therefore it is necessary to form two carefully divided parties, corresponding with these two aspects of the Socialist opposition (Centrist and Spartakist) rests on a purely dogmatic interpretation of the function of parties." The Independent Socialist Party and *Spartakusbund* were, she added, " two complementary heirs to the inheritance of the German and the International Social-democracy, whereby the former represents the practical experience of the old movement and the latter the theoretical outlook for the future. Hence the sharp opposition between these two tendencies, which embodies at once the tragic, internal conflict of the proletarian movement. This problem, however, cannot be be solved in a mechanical manner by a clean cut in organisation between the two. It can only be solved in open, constant and systematic struggle between two tendencies within one and the same party and in the long run it can only be decided by the objective historic developments."

If these words applied to Germany entering on a stage of acute revolutionary struggle, how much more so is it applicable to the present situation in England, where the Labour Party has not yet hopelessly compromised itself with reaction and, if the Left-Wing does its duty, probably never will.

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LONDON AND MOSCOW

By Dr. ROBERT DUNSTAN

(Labour Candidate for the Ladywood Division of Birmingham)

TO go from London to Moscow can be likened to the passage of Alice through the Looking Glass for on the other side everything is changed—right is left and left is right, but to come from Moscow to London is like the sad awakening from a pleasant adventurous dream to face our dull everyday life under Capitalism. Not that they dream in Russia for there at least they face the stern realities of the Workers' struggle to establish securely a Communist State, whilst here too many dream, though some merely pretend that the inevitable conflict can be avoided by reform or at the worst bought off by fantastic State purchase schemes.

In Russia you find a New World. No one in his senses would say that they have Communism there, or that Communism has been abandoned—the latter cry comes well enough from Capitalists or Reforming Socialists intent on proving to the working masses of Britain the failure and impossibility of the Russian movement, but the truth is that the Workers there were able to use a revolutionary period to seize power and that they have used that power to socialise the land, to secure control over industry and capital, and on this solid foundation they have commenced to build a Communal Society of Workers. In spite of the chaos created by the Imperialistic war, the blockade, intervention, civil war and famine they are succeeding. At first living from hand to mouth amidst a series of military, civil and economic crises they have managed to survive, and now in the calm of to-day's position they steadily, if slowly, gain ground.

This is past contradiction. If you doubt, visit Moscow as I have done and there you see a City of Workers, living as workers have never lived before in the history of the world. You see them in the streets, in their factories and clubs, or crowding into the Museums. You see them marching in their May Day Demonstration, mile after mile of workers, banner after banner dipping before the tomb of their dead Lenin, and cheering the leaders on whom the mantle

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of the prophet has fallen. Moscow is a Workers' City and amidst the yet remaining signs of passing ruin and disorder, it pulsates with new life. There over the Kremlin flies the Red Flag in authority, its proud position enhanced by the neighbouring crowned and gilded doubled-headed Eagle of the Spassky Tower, a reminder of the days of Tsardom now gone for ever. There is Moscow the nerve centre of Russia, the vast plain of endless possibilities. Timber, mines, oil and fertile land, all are now in the power of the workers and peasants. It is the richest part of the earth left undeveloped and this wealth is in the hands of the workers and under their care to be used not only for their own good, but for the benefit of the People's movement throughout the world in its last successful fight with capitalism and exploitation.

The struggle in Russia is by no means over and years of patient thought and hard work will be required before a final achievement can be claimed. But undeveloped as Communism yet is, life in Moscow already compares favourably with that of London. There is no lack of food, though great variety is not to be found, and the serious over-crowding that exists can but emphasise the great change that has come to Russia, for what house space there is has been equitably divided amongst the citizens. The workers move freely everywhere, there are no select quarters, as we understand the term, and since my return to England I have realised that in clothing they are better off than our own people, and when one turns to other than material things, to education, to the care of the children, to the growth of a social life, the workers of Moscow are to be envied. In Russia there is a spirit of comradeship and endeavour which is stimulating, and there you are made to feel at home.

From this I returned to London in time to hear of the glories of the Royal Court, and to see in the illustrated papers the pictures of the wives of Labour Ministers in their fineries. I discovered on the authority of Mrs. Snowden that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald makes an excellent figure in Court dress, and that the King has been not only correct in a Constitutional way to the Labour Government but extremely gracious. This is all very pretty, but it means that the *bar sinister* has been lifted from the Labour Party, and that the workers' movement under its present leadership is in grave danger of becoming a bulwark to Capitalism and the Court. Signs that

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this would happen were not wanting last year when Labour leaders fell over one another to accept invitations to aristocratic functions to meet royalty, and since the coming of the Labour Government there has been a disastrous hastening of the Rake's Progress. I read of the proceedings of the I.L.P. Conference at York and the apologies offered by the official scribe in the *Socialist Review*. Of how "the I.L.P. has wonderful adaptability," which indeed it has, when one year it can condemn the attendance of its leaders at society receptions, straining at a gnat and this year swallowing the camel silently, whilst rendering almost royal honours to the Prime Minister. The misadroit apologist writes: "I wonder what Keir Hardie would have said if he had been able to attend this York Conference?" and it is not difficult to say that he would not have remained silent in face of the unctuous sophistries of Mr. Allen and the reversal of last year's vote on the armaments question, but then, says the pharisaical scribe, "increased influence means altered tactics" and one can hear the voice of Hardie adding, "What! at the expense of principle?" The Conference accepted without effective protest "the accommodations and expedients" resorted to by their members in the Government and the unpalatable fact that the word "socialist" no longer pleased the delicate taste of Mr. MacDonald seems to have passed unheeded.

Is it not clear from this that the I.L.P., in spite of its retaining proletarian members, is no longer a Workers' Party? And as a result of this is it not receiving the attachment of large numbers of well-to-do supporters? A friend and I recently whilst travelling got into conversation with a typical member of the English middle class, who disclosed an entire lack of knowledge of the Labour-Socialist movement, as well as the fact that he signed the nomination papers of a successful Liberal candidate at the recent election, and then he amazed us both by stating that he had joined the I.L.P., as he thought it was going to be a successful political party and quite a safe one. This diagnosis on his part is undoubtedly correct, and the party founded by Keir Hardie has become a vested interest bound up not with the advance of socialism, but with the political fortunes of MacDonaldism.

It need cause no wonder that our Russian comrades, who are

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particularly well informed as to British politics, should laugh at the imitative " monkey tricks " of the Labour leaders at Court and be amazed at the apparent indifference of the working masses to the betrayal of their movement. They realise, however, that time must be given to the workers to see through the pro-capitalist policy of the Government, which at the best is but a Coalition. One day in Moscow an English speaking Russian comrade with a copy of Mr. MacDonald's pamphlet, *Why Socialism Must Come*, asked me what I thought of it ; he was especially amused at the statements " that the Russian experiment could not succeed because it adopted methods diametrically opposed to our own " and that " Russia returns to prosperity by adopting our methods." He wanted to know what the British Prime Minister's policy was and I am afraid I had difficulty in telling him, but I did my best to sketch the various wholesale measures of State purchase schemes outlined by responsible members of the I.L.P. at the 1923 Summer School, and of the " Constructive Programme " contained in the booklet entitled *The Socialist Programme*, published by the same party. He agreed that their measures were diametrically opposed to buying out the Capitalistic system leaving the vendors in possession of their privileges, but he laughed at the idea that the improved conditions in Russia were the result of adopting any other methods than their own. He rightly pointed out that the reconstruction going forward under the Soviet Government was founded upon the Socialisation of the land without compensation and the control of industry and capital by the state, or in other words that the re-forming of society after a Revolution giving the Workers power was a very different thing to attempting to reform society without destroying capitalism.

Here is the fundamental distinction between Moscow and London. There the Workers' Government has control, whilst with us the Master Class retains power disguised for the moment by a so-called Labour Government. It is our duty to strip the mask off, and let the dispossessed masses see the grinning face of Capitalism behind.

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THE GERMAN COMMUNIST PARTY

After the Frankfurt Congress

FOUR million votes were polled by the German Communist Party in the recent Reichstag elections ; that is to say, since 1920 the Communist vote has increased tenfold. And the Communist Party went into the elections with an outspoken revolutionary programme, calling on the masses to register their votes *against* bourgeois democracy and for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviet Republic.

The German Communist Party thus appears as the greatest revolutionary working-class Party outside Russia.

What is not generally known, and what makes this electoral victory the more remarkable, is that for the last several months the Party has been passing through a profound internal crisis of the utmost significance to the international working-class movement. This crisis has resulted in a complete change of leadership in the Party, and a clean sweep of the old Central Committee.

This crisis followed on the events of last autumn, when, it will be remembered, Communists joined with Left-wing Social Democrats to form Workers' Governments in Saxony and Thuringia. These Governments were overthrown at the end of October by the Stresemann-Social Democratic "Great Coalition." Simultaneously, an armed rising of the workers in Hamburg took place. But in a few days it appeared that the proletarian revolution, which had seemed imminent during the summer and early autumn, had received a severe setback.

A feeling of despondency took hold of large masses of the workers ; a feeling that the position had been surrendered without a fight. It is true that defeat might have come even if the Communist Party had led the workers forward to the armed struggle for power. But it began to be felt that defeat in itself was not necessarily a bad thing : to be defeated in a spirited and well-organised attack might be but a phase of victory. The real disaster was the evasion of battle when all the factors demanded battle.

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The situation was bluntly put in an article by Maslow, one of the leaders of the Left Wing in the German Communist Party. He said :—

> In October and November, 1923 . . . we had an economic crisis of unheard-of acuteness, the divisions in the camp of the enemy were greater than they had ever been, the proletariat was comparatively free from democratic illusions, the influence of the reformist organisations on the broad masses of the proletariat was almost destroyed, the influence of the Communists upon the proletariat and upon the petty bourgeoisie was greater than ever before, and the international situation was never so favourable. History demanded the struggle in October-November, 1923. Yet the proletariat was beaten, it suffered a defeat such as it had never experienced before.

At a meeting in January of the Executive of the Communist International with representatives of the German Communist Party, Zinoviev strongly criticised the attitude of the Communist ministers in the Saxon Workers' Government. He took as his theme a speech by Heckert, one of the Communist ministers, and pointed out that, though it might be considered a good Communist speech in normal times, it was certainly not so in a revolutionary crisis. He continued (according to the verbatim report of the meeting):—

> Heckert did not feel himself as a leader whom a revolutionary wave had raised on to the shoulders of the toiling masses. That feeling he did not possess. That is also impossible for anyone who feels that he is responsible to Parliament and bases his position on the Constitution. (Interruption: "That wave did not come.")
>
> No—the wave certainly did arrive—though perhaps not actually in Leipzig, yet it had obviously done so in the whole Reich. Remmele told us how the masses stayed the whole night in the streets, how excited the women were. Comrades, that is more important than volumes of elaborately drawn up theses. A feeling for the movements of the masses is absolutely necessary. . . . Even if this state of public opinion was not to be seen in Leipzig on October 25, it was to be seen in the other parts of Germany. Were you the mouthpieces for these feelings?
>
> ("That was spontaneous!")
>
> Good—the masses acted spontaneously, but Heckert, a leader of the Central Committee, did not act spontaneously. If he is a leader he must feel what is happening in the masses. Just that which Thaelmann, Remmele and Koenig[1] reflect, that we miss in his speeches and just that is the worst. We are no Shylocks who come and ask you why you did not provide weapons in ten days. We understand that. That

[1] Representatives of the Left Wing in the Party.

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was impossible, and that was soon obvious. That is not our charge anyway. What, on the other hand, was it prevented you from becoming the mouthpiece of the people? That we do not understand.

The criticism of the Central Committee—now definitely a Right Wing within the Party—was carried still further by the Left. An elaborate analysis of the crisis in the Party arising out of the October retreat, and of the retreat itself, was given by Ruth Fischer, one of the outstanding figures in the traditionally Left Wing Berlin district of the Party, in an article of which the following is an abstract:—

> The origin of the present crisis in the Party may be traced to the Leipzig Congress in January, 1923. At this Congress the opportunism of the Party Central Committee (with a majority opposed to the Party Left) was made clear by these facts:—
>
> (1) Their refusal to examine the question of the Ruhr: a refusal which clearly showed that the leaders of the Party, neglecting the big industrial districts such as the Ruhr, were concentrating their attention on Saxony and Thuringia, with a view to collaboration with the Social Democrats.
>
> (2) A wrong conception of the United Front, represented as an alliance with the Social Democratic Party, which it was proposed to convert from "the Left Wing of the bourgeoisie to the right wing of the working class."
>
> (3) An equally wrong conception of the Workers' Government, which it was proposed to employ as a method of "carrying out a working-class policy within the framework and by means of bourgeois democracy."[2]
>
> What did the Party do during the decisive months of 1923, when the enormous widening and deepening of the class struggle, accompanying the terrific crisis of German bourgeois society, was apparent, *physically* apparent, to every one? It preached alliance with the Social Democrats, and put forward the Workers' Government as a means of struggle within the framework of bourgeois democracy, together with a whole policy of "transitional stages." From January to May, 1923, the tactic of "open letters" (to the Social Democratic Party) was pursued. The Central Committee rejected any policy of active struggle in the Ruhr. As a concession to the Left the "Anti-Fascist Day" for June 29 was organised: the propaganda for this awakened the masses and foreshadowed an important Communist action. The Government forbade the demonstrations. The Central Committee acquiesced. Here already in this surrender was the germ of the October defeat.
>
> After the general strike which overthrew the Cuno Government

[2] This was the actual phrase of the theses of the Leipzig Congress on the Workers' Government.

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(August, 1923), and which took the Central Committee completely by surprise, the Left declared that the struggles of the immediate future must be of a decisive character, and should have for their object the conquest of power. The Factory Councils must be transformed into Workers' Councils (Soviets) and the slogan of the Workers' Government replaced by that of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

However, the Central Committee continued its policy of a United Front with the Social Democrats, and negotiated with them in Saxony for the formation of a Social-Democratic-Communist Government.[3] Three Communists (Heckert, Böttcher and Brandler) eventually entered this Government on the instructions of the Central Committee, not on their own terms, but on terms acceptable to the Social Democrats — *i.e.*, they dropped one of their chief demands, that the Government should be responsible to the Congress of Factory Councils, and virtually dropped their demand for the immediate arming of the Saxon workers' defence force (the "workers' centuries"). At any rate the centuries were not armed, and their mere formation was entirely neglected: also the Workers' Control Commissions (Anti-Profiteering Committees) were not encouraged in any way.

The Executive of the Communist International had agreed to the entry of the Communist Party into the Saxon Government solely for the purpose of arming the workers and preparing for the armed struggle for power. The arming of the workers did not take place. When the White troops of the military dictatorship were invading Saxony the Communist Party proposed at a general conference of Saxon Factory Councils at Chemnitz the declaration of a general strike. The Left Wing Social Democrats would not accept this proposal, whereupon the Communist Party "in order not to break the United Front" dropped it.

A rising took place at Hamburg, under Communist leadership, but it was isolated and had no connection with the Party forces in the rest of Germany. After a few days' magnificent fighting it was bloodily defeated. That was the final and complete defeat of the Party and of the workers.

These views rapidly gained the approval and support of the great mass of the Party membership. The Right Wing ceased to count in the Party: they attempted to justify themselves, but it was a hopeless task. A Centre grouping had also arisen, which differed from the Left in considering the October retreat inevitable, but criticised the Central Committee for not organising any rearguard action to cover the retreat.

By the end of March, when the voting took place in the Party districts for the Congress which met illegally at Frankfurt in early

[3] See THE LABOUR MONTHLY, November, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 5, pp. 303-305.

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April, the Left had won a complete victory. The voting was approximately as follows:—

Left	..	..	980
Centre	..	..	358
Right	..	..	11

A very lengthy programme of action was drawn up. The points particularly stressed included:—

(1) *Consolidation of the Party.*

This means a complete break with the whole previous outlook of the Party, when the United Front tactic was falsely employed, and made the Party feel that it was *one* Party among others. The Party is *the* Party of the German working class . . . The Party's task is to *organise the revolution*: it must accomplish this task day by day, hour by hour, whether the revolution be at hand or far distant.

(2) *Party Organisation must be based on the Factory Nucleus.*

(3) *Work in the Trade Unions.*

The reformist Trade Unions have lost heavily in numbers. The Trade Union leaders expel the revolutionary workers to make the Trade Unions into strike-breaking organisations and tools of the Government. The Communist Party must in consequence do its best to link up the Trade Union opposition, both among the working-class masses who remain in the Trade Unions and the unorganised workers. The Factory Councils ought to be the organs for this work. The watchword under which the entire work of the Party in this direction must be carried on is " the revolutionary unity of the proletariat." The work in the Trade Unions must be intensified in order to get hold of the masses of the workers organised in the Trade Unions, to educate them politically, and to get them into the Communist Party.

Those who leave the Unions without the consent of the Party facilitate the work of the Reformists, damage the Party and the Revolution. Neither must we arouse illusions by making a great to do about new Federations, as if really revolutionary Industrial Unions could be set up in a moment, which would at once abolish all the evils of capitalism in the twinkling of an eye. The task of transforming the Trade Unions into revolutionary industrial organisations must be carried out systematically ; such industrial organisations can only arise from the co-operation of the masses remaining in the Trade Unions with those outside them.

(4) *Parliamentary Work.*

We use Parliament simply for agitation, and in order to disorganise the bourgeois State machinery. There is no United Front in Parliament, but war to the knife against all the other Parties. In such a way will contact with the masses be maintained.

(5) *Organising the Class Struggle.*

All Party members, and particularly those in the factories and in the mass organisations of the workers, must make use of every wave of revolt among the workers and awaken the interest of the masses in order to organise and lead these struggles.

(6) *Arming of the Workers.*

(7) *Creation of Political Workers' Councils (Soviets).*

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The World of Labour

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INTERNATIONAL

Executive Meeting of the Labour and Socialist International

THE Executive Committee of the Labour and Socialist International met at Luxemburg on February 16 and 17. This was its first meeting since the constitution of the International at Hamburg in May, 1923.

The Secretariat reported that a questionnaire had been sent out to the forty-three Parties affiliated, of whom twenty had furnished the necessary returns. The total membership of these twenty Parties aggregated 6,673,792, the membership of all Parties being reported as "something over" 7,000,000. The Bureau of the Executive had held two meetings, and the Administrative Committee six. Attempts to establish an *International News Service* had failed. The Secretariat concluded its report by stating that:—

> The complicated political situation, repeatedly verging towards catastrophe, caused us to examine the possibility of a mass action. However, on account of the continually changing situation neither the Secretariat, the Administrative Committee nor the Bureau considered the time ripe for such action. The Secretariat has ever in mind the fact that our organisation is but in its infancy, that we must not express any exaggerated hopes . . .

There followed formal reports and discussions on finance, organisation, relations with the International Federation of Trade Unions, the Socialist Youths' International, the International Committee of Socialist Women, &c.

After deciding that there should be an additional levy of £6 per Congress vote, and that Mr. Tom Shaw should be granted unpaid leave of absence till the next Executive Meeting, the meeting turned with apparent zest to attack the Workers' International Relief. As readers of THE LABOUR MONTHLY are aware, the W.I.R. is a non-party working-class relief organisation, which is at the moment concentrating its efforts on the relief of German workers, and which includes in its membership many outstanding Trade Unionists, Co-operators and Socialists, as well as Communists.

Adler, the secretary of the International,

> reported on the efforts of the Communists to accomplish their "United Front Tactics" in the form of the Workers' International Relief. Unfortunately Socialists in many countries, not understanding that this relief for Germany is but a manœuvre of the Communist International, had given support to the movement.

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It was emphasised that all contributions for German workers should be sent through a purely Social-Democratic organisation, the Central Committee for Workers' Welfare (*Hauptausschuss für Arbeiterwohlfahrt*).

The chief discussion at the meeting took place on the resolution on the Political Situation. This resolution was mainly concerned with the present position of the Reparations question. We extract the following statement from the resolution as finally passed :—

> Admittedly it is a step in advance that, since the Labour Party came into power, capitalist Governments have been themselves compelled to aim at a peaceful economic settlement of the Reparations problem, but, at the same time, the Executive desires to draw attention to the fact that even a peaceful economic solution of this problem, such as capitalist Governments are now endeavouring to find, may become a serious menace to the international proletariat.
>
> If, for instance, this settlement were to impose upon the German working class burdens which could only be borne by an extension of the eight-hour day in Germany, and by a distinct reduction in the actual wages of the German workers, the mechanism of capitalist competition would compel other countries to lengthen their working day and reduce wages . . . Capitalist Governments, which have already reduced the standard of living of the workers by disputes over the Reparations question, may try to reduce this standard still further by an agreement as to the settlement of the Reparations problem by purely capitalist methods.

It will be interesting to note the attitude adopted by the International towards the Expert Committees' Reports, which propose simply a "settlement . . . by purely capitalist methods"—the "stabilisation" of Germany under the domination of foreign imperialist finance-capital. So far its principal affiliated parties, the Labour Party, the German, French and Belgian Social Democrats, have eagerly welcomed these reports as a step towards the "Settlement of Europe."

The emphasis laid in the resolution quoted above on the dangers to the working class of a capitalist solution of the Reparations problem was due to the strong representations of Otto Bauer (Austria), whose Party has had grim practical experience of what "stabilisation" means. He insisted that the International should not in any way identify itself with such a solution. In opposition to him a delegate of the German Social-Democratic Party stated that his Party

> could not adopt a purely negative attitude towards capitalist efforts for a solution.

A Czecho-Slovak delegate made a statement to the same effect: and a Belgian delegate went further, stating that the International

> should acknowledge any progress made, which progress would be due to Socialist efforts to a certain degree. We should not belittle the hopes which lie in this success.

Mr. C. T. Cramp, in the name of the English delegation, took the opportunity to ask the meeting

> to try and understand the position of the British Labour Party, which while in office, is really not in power. The English delegation did not know MacDonald's views in detail, but they wished to point out that the resolution to be framed should not play into the hands of those adversaries who accuse the Labour Government of being under the dictatorship of the International.

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A further resolution was passed calling for the defence of the eight-hour ay, in view of which it seems strange that there should have been no mention of the part played by the German Social-Democratic Party in sabotaging the struggle for the eight-hour day in Germany. Indeed, the most striking omission at the meeting was the complete lack of any discussion on the German situation, and the openly counter-revolutionary and anti-working-class rôle of the Social-Democrats.

Similarly, there were no reports or discussion on imperialism, just as there were no representatives of exploited colonial races present.

Other resolutions included one on Hungary and one on Armenia: concluding with the perennial attack on the Soviet Government by way of the "Socialist" prisoners in Russia and the "occupation" of Georgia, supported by the counter-revolutionary MM. Abramovitch, Sukhomlin and Tseretelli.

ITALY

The Working Class and the Elections

AS was expected, the Fascist reign of terror in Italy gave their Party an enormous majority at the elections on April 6. The electoral campaign was marked by continual Fascist atrocities, the suppression of all opposition meetings, assault and mutilation of workers and the murder of workers' candidates. On polling day Fascist militia were employed for rounding up voters, and terrorising them into voting Fascist.

On the workers' side there was confusion and hesitancy, save in the Communist Party, which from the first decided to participate in the election, and proposed to the two Socialist parties the constitution of a common "Proletarian Unity Bloc" for that purpose. The right wing Reformist Unitary Socialists immediately refused this proposal. The Centrist Maximalist Socialists wavered for some time between acceptance and refusal. Meanwhile, an acute crisis had arisen in the Maximalist Party, the workers in the Party being profoundly dissatisfied with its opportunist leadership. However, eventually, on February 13, the Maximalists refused the offer. The Third Internationalist section of the Maximalists, led by Serrati, forthwith accepted the offer, and the "Proletarian Unity Bloc" was formally constituted, a Central Electoral Committee being set up on February 20.

The voting figures for the chief parties were:—

Fascists	4,135,677
Fascists' Second List	351,080
Communists ("Proletarian Bloc")	266,415
Maximalists	362,568
Unitary Socialists	418,948
Popular Party	643,469
Liberals	139,825
Republicans	132,256

In industrial areas, such as Lombardy, where the voting was heaviest, the Fascists had either only a very small majority over all other Parties, or else were actually in a minority. In Lombardy, too, the losses of the bourgeois Liberal and democratic Parties corresponded with large Communist gains.

The Communist Party is the only opposition Party that has gained, having increased its deputies from 13 to 17. The Unitary Socialists have lost 57, and the Maximalists 18, while the Popular Party lost 66.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE UNEXPIATED CRIME

The Russian Soviet Republic. By Professor Edward Alsworth Ross, Ph.D., LL.D., Illustrated. (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.).

The First Time in History. Two years of Russia's New Life (August, 1921—December, 1923.) By Anna Louise Strong, Ph.D. With a Preface by Leon Trotsky. (Boni & Liveright, New York. £2.00; The Labour Publishing Company, London, 6s.

Russia's Counter-Claims. For Socialist and Labour Speakers. By W. P. Coates. With a Preface by A. A. Purcell, M.P. (National "Hands off Russia" Committee).

AT the present moment the workers of this country are confronted with the unedifying spectacle of the Labour Government, the Government which the great mass of them fondly regard as their own, miserably truckling to the interests of the finance-capitalists in its dealings with the Soviet Union. Exactly how unedifying that spectacle is can be perceived from Professor Ross's book. For Professor Ross, who is a respected American sociologist, free from any taint of sympathy for the revolutionary working-class movement—indeed, his comments on it are invariably ludicrous—has compiled a formidable *dossier* demonstrating the frightful responsibility of the imperialist bourgeoisie of Britain for the counter-revolutionary interventions against the first Workers' Republic.

There is now no longer any doubt that the internal forces of counter-revolution in Russia were almost completely crushed by the spring of 1918. The death of Korniloff in April of that year seemed the final blow to the hopes of the Whites. While the imperialist bandits were cutting each other's throats in the fields of France and among the sands of Syria and Mesopotamia, proletarian Russia hopefully turned to the task of laying the foundations of a Socialist economy. But it was not to be.

The Whites, admitting that alone they were powerless, demanded assistance from the imperialist bourgeoisie of the Entente—after Miliukov had made preliminary soundings in Germany. And the response was no mean one. Was there not the fearful menace of the first proletarian State in the world to be combated at all costs? Were there not the vast material resources of Russia to be grabbed and exploited? So came the support of the Czecho-Slovaks, the Archangel-Murmansk adventure, the Kolchak-Denikin-Wrangel interventions *et hoc genus omne.* So, too, came the intrigues of the British secret agent, Bruce Lockhart, and other gentlemen of his kidney.

Lockhart endeavoured to buy over the commander of the Lettish Red Guard, spending 1,900,000 roubles for this purpose.

> "The scheme," says Professor Ross, "was to bag the entire Council of People's Commissars at one of its plenary sessions. At the same moment the State Bank and the central telephone and telegraph stations were to be seized and all public meetings prohibited under pain of death until the arrival of the British military authorities from the North. The heads of the church were to prepare the minds of the pious for this stroke by uttering prayers and sermons all over Russia for the overthrow of the Bolsheviks. The *coup* would then seem to be the response of Divine Providence."

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Fortunately the plot was frustrated, and the British Embassy, the head and centre of it, searched: it was during this incident that Captain Cromie opened fire on the search party and was very properly shot dead.

Let it be remembered, too, that it was British imperialism that most enthusiastically supported the dictatorship assumed by Kolchak, when he overthrew the wretched Avksentiev "Provisional Government" at Omsk. Let it be remembered that it was not

> the popularity of the anti-Soviet cause that enabled Denikin's army to advance in the summer of 1919 till it held a fourth part of Russia, but simply the terrible execution wrought by the guns, tanks and bombing air planes provided by Great Britain.

Miss Strong recalls another typical incident. British imperialism was set on extending its dominion over the whole of the Middle East, and its eyes were greedily fixed on the illimitable treasures of Russian oil. So in the spring of 1919 a British army took Baku. Their first act was to execute in cold blood twenty-seven Communists who had been the leading figures in the Azerbaidjan government.

This is the crime that is yet unexpiated—the attempt of British imperialism to overthrow with blood and iron the Soviet Republic, to give back the land to the landlords and the factories to the capitalists, and to get its own claws into the rich prey that Russia offered. The attempt cost Britain one hundred millions sterling; the cost to Russia was incalculable. Mr. Coates estimates, in his excellent pamphlet, that, on the most conservative basis, Russia's bill for damages directly caused by the counter-revolutionary activities of British imperialism is round about the huge figure of two thousand millions sterling.

It was Mr. Lloyd George, no less, who claimed that:—

> There is no country that has spent more in supporting the anti-revolutionary elements in Russia than this country has, and there is no country approaches this in the sacrifices that have been made—not one. France, Japan, America—Britain has contributed more than all these Powers put together, and I boast of it because I consider it is an obligation of honour on our part.

To the workers of Britain it is no boast, no "obligation of honour." It is a deep and bitter shame: and the only reparation possible would be a cancellation of all claims against the Soviet Republic, the full recognition of its right to nationalise property without compensation and the granting of a reconstruction loan of, say, £100 million.

That is what a British Workers' Government would have done. No one of these things has been done by the Labour Government. The formality of recognition has been accorded, but that is all. Even yet there has been no exchange of Ambassadors. At the opening of the Anglo-Soviet Conference Mr. MacDonald said in so many words that the Labour Government proposed to fight for the interests of the bondholders and the owners of nationalised property. Well might the *Manchester Guardian* remark that it must now be plain to the Soviet delegates that they were dealing with a government "essentially capitalist" so far as concerned foreign affairs!

The books before us throw into a glaring light the infamy of such a position.

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An extremely interesting point on which Professor Ross lays a good deal of stress is that British imperialism only came to terms with Soviet Russia (Trade Agreement 1920-21) when the rising tide of revolt in India, Persia, &c., was seriously threatening its dominion in India and the Middle East. There can be no sort of doubt that the success of the workers' power in Transcaucasia, Bokhara, Turkestan, and the justly great influence of the Soviet Republic in Persia, Afghanistan and so forth finally disposed of British hegemony in the Middle East.

For the rest, Miss Strong gives us some good sympathetic sketches of the New Economic Policy in action. She describes, with the warm-hearted enthusiasm we have learned to expect from the legion of American "radical" journalists who have gone to Russia to see the Revolution at home, that

> long year by year fight in the economic field between State capitalism which hopes to become Communism, and private capitalism which hopes to become dominant,

which is the essential fact of the N.E.P. She brings home, in a hundred little ways, the overwhelming "difference" between Russia and the rest of the world. In Russia the workers are the governing class in society—the bourgeoisie, their power shattered, are firmly under the thumb of the working class.

That tremendous fact may have escaped the notice of the present Labour Government. Or perhaps they realise it only too well, and as they are themselves but a sham "Workers' Government," so they dare not stretch out the hand of brotherhood to a real Workers' Government.

G. A. H.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

What is Socialism? A symposium edited by Dan Griffiths. (Grant Richards. 2s. 6d.)

Human Nature in Politics. By Professor Graham Wallas, M.A., D.Litt. (Constable. Third edition, revised. 7s. 6d.)

Our Work and Profit System. By Dr. Alfred P. Schultz. (Co-operative Press, New York. 10 cents.)

Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald. By Lucy Herbert. (Women Publishers, Ltd. 1s.)

The Churches and War. By F. A. A. (The Swathmore Press. 6d.)

The Anthracite Question. By Hilman S. Ranshenbush. (The H.W.Wilson Company, New York. $1.50.)

Catalogue, Department No. 14: Politics, Economics (including Political Biographies), Industry, Social Reform. Second-hand and New Books. (W. & G. Foyle.)

Socialism and Sarolea. A reply to Professor Araster Sarolea. By Ernest Trueman. (The Economics Club, Leswick, 3d.)

People's Guide to Free Trade. By George Frederick Emery, LL.M. (Effingham Wilson. 1s.)

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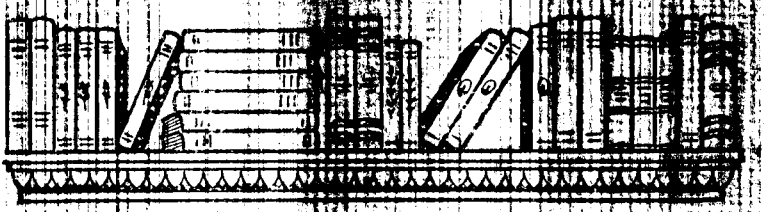

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